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THE  
VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

“MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS,”

“MR. AND MRS. ASHETON,”

&c., &c.

“Who are the Blest?

They who have kept their sympathies awake,  
And scattered joy for more than custom's sake—  
Steadfast and tender in the hour of need;  
Gentle in thought, benevolent in deed;  
Whose looks have power to make dissensions cease—  
Whose smiles are pleasant, and whose words are peace:  
They who have lived as harmless as the dove,  
Teachers of Truth, and Ministers of Love:  
Love for all moral power—all mental grace—  
Love for the humblest of the human race—  
Love for that tranquil joy that virtue brings—  
Love for the Giver of all goodly things;  
True followers of that soul-exalting plan  
Which Christ laid down to bless and govern man:  
They who can calmly linger at the last,  
Survey the future, and recall the past;  
And with that hope which triumphs over pain,  
Feel well assured they have not lived in vain;  
Then wait in peace their hour of final rest:—

They are the only Blest.”

T. C. PRINCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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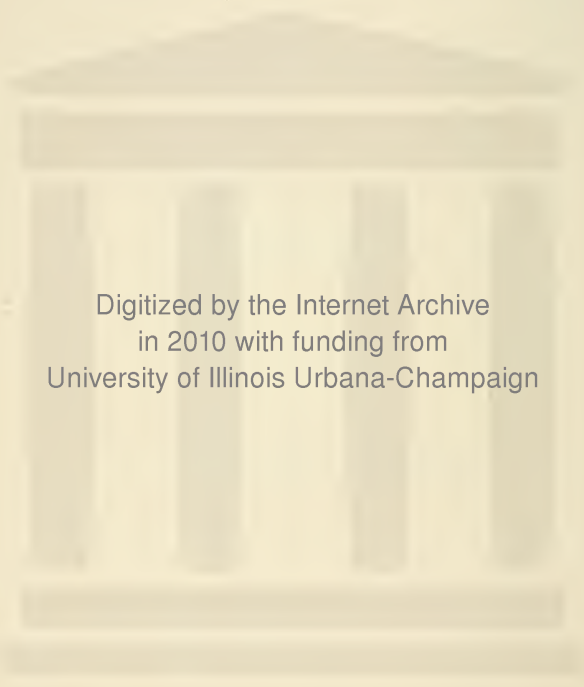
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THE  
VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES.

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CHAPTER I.

“ 'Tis never woman's part,  
Out of her fond misgivings, to perplex  
The fortunes of the man to whom she cleaves;  
'Tis her's to weave all that she has of fair  
And bright in the dark meshes of their web,  
Inseparate from their windings.”—*Talfourd*.

ON the 23rd of April, fifty-four years ago, the heavy old Bristol coach was preparing its freight of passengers and luggage, previous to starting on its weekly journey into Wales.

The hour was early, six o'clock, and



the morning was rather more than damp. For the drizzling rain fell; though so hypocritically, that those exposed to it scarce thought a shelter necessary, until the wind, driving with easterly sharpness up the street, chilled and damped them into the fact that it was a most disagreeable morning.

Besides the usual number of ostlers, porters, helpers, and coachman, there seemed but one passenger to brave the ungenial aspect of the morning, and his countenance bore ample evidence that he felt it.

His appearance had nothing very striking about it: of moderate height, he yet was not slight enough to give elasticity to his movements; and it was with slow, quiet method that he helped to arrange his luggage, showing gleams through his spectacles as he did so of large, gentle-looking dark eyes. Clothed in black, his

dress ending in gaiters buttoned to the knee—he appeared what he really was, a young clergyman. And though in addition to his fine eyes he discovered, as he spoke his thanks, teeth beautiful in regularity and purity of colour, there was nothing remarkable in his countenance, but an expression of grave sense, and honest purpose.

The drizzle now changed to a patter upon the rude and deserted pavement; and if he had looked grave before, the young clergyman now became undeniably vexed. He looked up to the sky and shook his head—he looked down the street and appeared more concerned than ever, as he saw two figures emerge out of the misty darkness.

“Dear John, here we are!—in time, I hope,” said the first one, in a voice so sweet, so mellow, so fresh, that ostlers, porters, boots, and coachman, all turned

round to look for the speaker. She was worthy of her voice. Bright and smiling was her face, as she turned towards them with simple graciousness, that gave a gentle dignity to the happiness expressed on it. Even the rain seemed ashamed, as her beaming eyes looked up to the heavy swollen clouds, sinking again into a drizzle, which again faded away into mere dampness, as her voice rose like soft melody in the wet street.

“Baby is both good and merry, though we have awakened her so early—and we have had a most excellent breakfast—and here we are, quite ready, dear John.”

“My love, the rain—such a bad morning,” began the grave young clergyman.

“Not at all, John, it is going to be fine, the wind is in the east. This is but ‘the pride of the morning,’ and we shall have a finer day in consequence.”

John's brow cleared.

"But you will go inside, Emily, until it is better."

"Oh no, John, I am to sit by you, outside—you promised. See, I have my glazed wrapper—I shall take no harm."

Her look was more irresistible than her words; for John said no more, while ostlers and porters vied with each other in running for the steps to help her up; and the solemn old coachman departed from his usual rule of considering the passengers as so many bales of goods, to be stowed away only by the porters, and actually handed her up himself. They all felt, if "John" had refused her request, they must have mutinied on the spot and hissed him down.

Not that she required much assistance; for she mounted the ladder with such agility that the spectators were quite aggrieved, they saw so little of a beautiful

foot and ankle. And while her husband followed with careful slowness, she was kissing her hand to baby, who was being packed inside, and looked rather astonished at the elevated situation of her pretty mamma.

“ Good-bye, baby darling, mamma will be close to you, dear, and nurse will take care of her. Thank you, Mr. Coachman, nothing can be more comfortable than my seat. Thank you all, very much. See, John, how nicely and kindly that good man holds baby, while nurse is settling her packages. She looks quite pleased with her new nurse. Thank you very much for holding her.”

“ ’Deed, my lady, I am thinking she’s never a child of yours, if she could seem ill-pleased.”

John looked up—his white teeth gleamed—while Emily blushed and smiled at the rough compliment.



But now all was ready; though loth to lose sight of the bright vision on the coach, the head-ostler felt it his duty to say, "All right!" The horses heard the sound, and simultaneously pulled—the coachman flourished his whip—the ponderous coach creaked and shook—Emily smiled and waved her little hand—John gravely took off his hat, and they slowly wheeled out of sight.

All the ostlers, boots, and porters stared open-mouthed after it.

"My heyes! Bill," says Jem, the first to recover, "what a purty creatur that wor!"

"Ye moy say thot," answered Bill; "she wor barley-sugar all over."

"What a mort o' luck that there young mon has, always a carrying o' that there sunbeam with him," said Jack. "I never seed any one mount ou're coach so loightly, or show such a fut and hankel. And her face—whoy it broightened moy boottens!"

“Ay! joost as it ’ull broighten that there young mon’s loife a’ his days, if the Lord ’ull please to spare her to him.”

“May the Lord please to let us see her agin. It maks a soight o’ difference, Jem, when one thinks t’ould coach carries sich loike coompany.”

“Ay, ay, a’m main glad I polished her oop, and stook a bit oak leaf on the horse’s heeds.”

“They ought to go prood the day, howsumdever—and they picks up Captain Hill at the bar.”

“He’s looky—he’ll be all the length o’ the journey wi’ yon.”

“A’wud maist roon it to get soight on her.”

Meantime “dear John” had persisted in holding an umbrella over the pretty wife, while she protested it did not rain.

No more it did. It had shrunk into nothing, utterly ashamed as it were, the

clouds sailed slowly away, a flickering sun-beam appeared. This was so welcomed by that happy voice, that another, and again another, peeped out to be greeted in the same manner ; until, at last, the glorious sun himself appeared, and the day broke beautifully over the earth.

“How lovely everything looks, dear John, with the sun lighting up the dewdrops.”

“Dewdrops ! dear love ; any other person but you would call them rain.”

“Perhaps it is rain, John, and that makes this sweet, fresh smell of wholesome earth so redolent in the air. I like morning shadows better than evening ones—don’t you, John ?”

Here a fellow-traveller, whom they had picked up at the toll-bar, answered for John ; and, being an intelligent fellow, and much smitten with the beauty and happiness of his fair fellow-traveller, entered warmly into all sorts of agreeable descriptions.

Thus they approached the Old Passage much sooner than they expected, Emily beaming with delight at the first view of the Welsh mountains.

“Those far blue hills, that I have so often wished to visit, John. Think of our happiness—we are now to live upon them!”

“My Emily, they look beautiful; but I misdoubt me—I ought to have come alone first. I should have left you with your mother, until I had seen if our new home was likely to suit you.”

“Not at all, John—oh! not at all! Don’t you think, sir,” continued she, turning to their fellow-traveller, “that a woman is quite the best judge of what a place looks like, when you intend turning it into a home. Besides, John, you would have been very unhappy without me—and perhaps thought our new abode dreadful.”

“I daresay I should, dear,” answered John, while their fellow-traveller warmly

coincided with her, winding up with saying :—

“The choosing of a home is peculiarly a woman’s province. She can see at a glance whether she can convert it into that Paradise which all newly-married people have the chance of keeping for themselves, as long as they forbid discord to enter.

“That is a new idea, sir,” said John, gravely.

“A charming idea!” exclaimed his wife. “Ah, John, if God wills, our home shall be a Paradise!”

“With you, love, it must be,” looked John, through his eyes, spite of spectacles; for John was not demonstrative, especially on the top of a coach—besides, they were about to cross the ferry. John and Emily walked up and down the little pier waiting for the boat, and exchanging a few words with baby, whose little round face was still too wonder-stricken to respond thereto.



“You see, Emily,” said her husband, “we must look at our position in a sensible and calm manner. I have accepted this living—so handsomely presented me by Lord Bernard without solicitation—in rather a hurry, I think.”

“How, John? I do not understand you.”

“Why, love, drawn away by your enthusiasm for mountains, and by my own love for the peculiar duties of this place, I have brought you and baby to these wild Welsh hills, without knowing what sort of roof you will have to cover you, or with whom you will have to associate.”

“Is that all, John, which disturbs you? Now, that is the very thing so charming to me. Besides, we were told the parsonage is a very good house; and the living being 300*l.* a-year, we shall not spend half that, and can save the remainder to make it into our paradise.”

“I have heard,” answered John, “that the house is a very good one—nay, very large and commodious—but it is in a very bad situation. The smoke of the furnaces and iron-works completely surround it, so that we cannot hope to have anything like a garden, that is, one which will be of any use to us.”

“There is nothing like trying, John; something must grow in such a lovely country.”

“But, Emily, unfortunately I hear that close to it there is one of those new inventions, a gasometer; and when the wind blows that way the effluvium is extremely disagreeable.”

“Oh, I daresay it will not often blow our way, dear John; and then think how convenient—perhaps the parsonage may be lighted with gas, which will save candles.”

“You always look at the bright side of everything, my Emily.”

“Ah, who could help it, John, talking of candles?” said Emily, smiling. “But I should like to know one thing—is not the Neath Valley lovely?”

“It is,” said their neighbour on the coach, who, without disturbing the conjugal talk, had lingered near enough to see the bright face, and catch a stray word now and then. “But here is the packet; while we cross I will give you some description of it.”

When the bustle was over, and all were seated quietly, baby happy at last on mamma’s knee, and the boat gliding over the smooth water, very seldom so placid and gently flowing as then, their fellow-traveller began:—

“I need not tell you that where the foot of man treads, so do the wild beauties of nature disappear. I do not say all beauty; for much as I admire nature in her freedom, the various conveniences, comforts, and

luxuries, with other species of delights that men gather round them, enhance nature to me, and make her in my eyes still more to be admired. But as regards the Neath Valley, I can but be sorry that man has interfered: on the face of God's earth I suppose no place was ever more beautiful."

"Indeed!" said Emily, with quick pleasure.

"Does not the river Hepsti run through it," said her husband, "on which there are some beautiful waterfalls?"

"There are," answered the traveller; "and I suppose you also know that this country, so lovely on its surface, is one vast coal basin within its bosom. Therefore, my dear madam, you must expect to see the fairest and most romantic spots occupied by furnaces, kilns, fires, houses. The smoke, pervading and spoiling everything, turns the bright green of nature into dirty soot."

“But the mountains—the blue Welsh hills!” remonstrated Emily.

“Truly, those do raise their noble heads too high for man to disfigure them. They remain intact, as when the word of God commanded them into being. But, consequent upon the richness of its bosom, you must be prepared to find, that even the proprietor of one acre will never suffer that one acre to remain in its original loveliness. Everywhere do they search and dig for the black diamonds beneath—and everywhere will this lovely valley, in the course of years, be disfigured and smoke-dried.”

“I shall not, however, care so much for that,” said Emily, “while these lovely hills, on which I have longed to live, are spared. Besides, if it had not been for all these furnaces, kilns, and iron-works, we should not have had my wish accomplished—we should not have come to live here.”

“True,” said her husband; “an English



clergyman was required for the mixed and various people who congregate round the works of man. People of almost every nation—to say nothing of religion—are to be found among the Welsh hills ; and from what I can hear, none are more cared for than those on Lord Bernard's property."

"Let me introduce myself to you, sir, as a neighbour ; for I suppose you are the new clergyman now expected. I am Captain Hill : I live in the neighbouring valley, and am delighted to be the first to welcome you to our country."

Emily held out her hand in cordial pleasure, while John raised his hat with his accustomed gravity. Nevertheless, pleasure beamed from his countenance as he surveyed the fine, soldier-like looking old man, who was so chatty, and full of *bonhomie*.

Captain Hill, on his part, was delighted to find his surmises correct, and that he was not likely to lose sight of the beaming face

beside him, at the end of their journey by the coach ; but, on the contrary, might hope to become yet more intimate with the sweet spirit that animated such a countenance.

But the passage being accomplished, they once more took their places on the coach, and proceeded on their journey.

Now, baby—who had hitherto proved herself a pattern-baby, worthy of her mother—from some, no doubt, solid reasons only known to herself, began loudly to express her disapprobation of further travelling.

“ Dear love, how that child cries ! ” said John, as baby’s screams rose now and then above the rattle of the coach.

“ Yes, dear John ; but how fortunate it is no one is inside the coach save nurse.”

John cogitated on this atom of comfort, and the feelings that prompted it, until they arrived at Chepstow, where baby, having food for her mind, through the medium of

her eyes, gazed at the houses and people instead of screaming.

But, leaving Chepstow, they had again audible demonstration that her equanimity of temper was not restored. As John walked up a steep hill, Emily begged him to enquire into the welfare of the little refractory one—by this request removing a doubt from John's mind as to whether Emily cared more for baby's distress of mind, or the comfortable state of the oral organs of the passengers. Baby was happily unconscious of everything, looking the picture of sleeping comfort; so once more they gave themselves up to the pleasures of their journey.

The more nearly they approached the Welsh hills, the more delighted Emily became, fascinating her fellow-travellers with the charm of her unsophisticated delight. The day had continued most lovely; they had picked up many more passengers, who

seemed all equally disposed to be chatty and sociable. But who could resist that sweet liveliness? Even the coachman, most imperturbable of human beings to all save his horses, was in danger of upsetting the coach, he was so often turning round to look at his pretty passenger. And, as the time approached for their parting, he became gloomy and morose at the mere prospect of it; while she called upon John and Captain Hill to corroborate her evidence as to the delightful journey they had had—"So well managed, the coach so well driven, the coachman so kind to his horses, such a lovely day, and baby so good—that one fit of naughtiness had been the first and last!"

But all things, pleasant or unpleasant, must end. The evening came on rather suddenly, with a lowering aspect, as much as to say, "Come, I have not rained all day on purpose to please you; but if

you don't hasten, and get into your houses, I will wait no longer."

Now come the great fires. Anon they are among them ; baby winks and blinks her eyes at them, too astonished to cry. The well-trained horses swerve neither to the right nor left, though they seem going down into a pit, with a hundred forked tongues of flame—blazing with apparent eagerness to swallow up coach, passengers, and horses.

It is of no use denying it—Emily is nervous. She grasps John's hand. It is on her lips to beg the coachman will stop and put them down anywhere. But there is a great roaring in the air ; the coach turns a corner suddenly, and before them are huge caverns of fire, with enormous black domes rising up in the air, with forked flames tearing themselves high above all.

The off-leader starts and plunges a little ;

the coachman flicks his whip over him to recall him to his senses ; Emily gives a little shriek ; the coach staggers over a tram-road—down they go deeper and deeper ; the roar subsides, the fires grow dim, the coachman relieves his feelings with a deep sigh, the reins relax, the horses bound steadily on, and Emily ceases to pinch John's arm.

“Dear John, what a shocking place !—we will never go that way again.”

“Oh ! never fear, marm,” answered the coachman ; “we goes this here road twice a-week, for’ards and back’ards, and never no accidents happens. We have a few more on ’em yet to go through—and yonder, marm, is yourn works, furthest off to the west.”

To ordinary passengers the coachman was in the habit of indulging in some grim joke—such as privately aggravating his horses, cutting sharp round corners, and making

up a face of awful import as they pass through these Pandemonium scenes. But to the gentle Emily he relapsed into a tender-hearted mortal. Emily gave a sigh as she heard him, and John listened for the soft sweet voice uttering words of thanks or pleasure—but none came. He was still cogitating over this in his mind, all his old fears reviving, all his doubts returning, wishing this, wishing that, wishing anything rather than having brought this bright nature down to such unknown, unexpected scenes, when they came to more fires. Safely they passed through them, almost before they thought they were in them. Emily had not time to pinch John much; she even said, “Dear John, this is a wonderful sight!” So he comforted himself a little, until they came to others. Emily only grasped his hand, and, when they were through, said, “Dear John, what charming horses, and how well coachman drives



them. Do you know, I think these fires are very beautiful. Even the horses seem to admire them." So John dismissed all his fears, and nothing happened until the coach, being hailed, stopped.

"Be one Muster Leslie here?"

"Yes, oh yes—here we are!" said Emily ;  
"is this our home—are we to stop?"

"You be to stop, ma'am, and I ha' got a little chay, to take you and the things to the parsonage."

"Is it far from here?" said Mr. Leslie.

"Oh, no," said Captain Hill, who was assisting Emily—"not ten minutes' drive, but it is all through the furnaces and over tram-roads. Shall I come with you?"

"Oh! no, thank you," said Emily ; "I begin to like the fires, and I suppose the horse is steady that has to take us."

"He were born here," said their new driver, shortly ; "and he don't know his road wi'out a blaze."



“Then I think you are quite safe,” said Captain Hill, laughing.

“So we are,” said Emily, smiling—  
“now, nurse, give me baby; are all our packages in, John? Thank you—thank you all,” and, as the coachman drove reluctantly on, they still heard the sweet voice repeating—“such a charming journey!—such an excellent coachman—quite sorry to part!” and even the drive of five miles on to the end of their journey did not suffice to give them time to talk about the beauty and sweetness of their pretty fellow-traveller.

## CHAPTER II.

“Sweet peace be theirs—the moonlight of the breast,  
And occupation, and alternate rest,  
And, dear to care and thought, the usual walk ;  
Theirs be no flower that withers on the stalk,  
But roses cropp’d that shall not bloom in vain,  
And Hope’s bless’d sun, that sets to rise again.  
Be chaste their nuptial bed, their home be sweet,  
Their floor resound the tread of little feet.  
Bless’d beyond fear and fate, if bless’d by thee,  
And heirs, O Love, of thine eternity.”

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

THE vicarage was an exceedingly good house—that is, to look at. You certainly went through a vortex of furnaces to get at it—over various and complicated tram-roads—down and up little steep pitches—round narrow corners. But you had the light of

a hundred fires to enable you to see your danger ; and without any accident, with no other adventure than baby's eyes getting larger and rounder as she watched the fires, they arrived at the door of a large and substantial mansion. The entrance-hall was lighted by a fire that did not look pale even after the furnaces ; and leaving the drawing and dining-rooms to the right and left unvisited, they were ushered into a room which gave to their delighted eyes the comfortable appearance of a little "snuggery."

The table was prepared for tea, the kettle singing on the hob, the curtains all drawn—while sparkling, blazing, and crackling, as if to welcome them to the best of its abilities, the fire threw a bright ruby tint over the whole room.

Even John echoed Emily's remark.

"How charming—how delightful ! The kettle is absolutely boiling to the minute.

Here, John, hold baby while I make tea ; and pray warm her feet at this lovely fire."

John took baby ; and though most anxious to obey the order, he had not the most remote idea as to where he should find the little feet, amid the bundle of clothes in which she was wrapped.

Baby began to screw up her little face, preparatory to "giving tongue" at her father's awkward attempts to make her comfortable, when Emily, having made tea, taken off her bonnet and cloak, smoothed her hair, looking more bright and animated than ever, caught her up in her arms, and, giving her sweet motherly kisses, changed the anticipated roar into a coo of delight. So that they sat down, one more happy than another, to tea.

Truly it was a very pretty sight to see the family party thus enjoying themselves after their long and weary (no, not weary

—Emily would not have allowed such a word), but slow journey by the ponderous Bristol coach.

The little small library, all glowing with a ruddy light from the fire—the singing home-like kettle—the smoking, hot, delicious tea, John making his peace with baby by tempting offers of sugar and sopped toast—she with rosy toes spread out to enjoy the genial warmth—and then that young mother !

But she must be described, now that the heavy wrapper is gone and the little close bonnet removed. Why, what would the ostlers, boots, and porters say now? Nothing—for they could not do so. She is of another mould than earth—she comes from a higher sphere than theirs; they would look and worship at a distance.

Tall and beautifully made, her small head was placed upon a neck that upheld it with a stately grace. The flowing curls of brown

hair, rippled over with a golden tint borrowed from the sun, shaded each peach-coloured cheek; and, being somewhat in disorder, they fell round her fair throat with the pretty wildness that only hair can assume.

The clearest, sweetest, bluest eyes ever seen in mortal face looked straight into your heart; while the delicate, well-shaped nose and rosy lips completed a picture of as fair a young mother of nineteen as imagination could draw from her vast stores of thought and wonder.

And what did John think as he looked at her, the glowing, smiling mistress of his home fireside—he, the only spectator of this picture?

John doted upon it; he had admiration of, and love for her, in his heart, sufficient for a room-full of admiring spectators, and himself to boot. So that when nurse came and took away sleepy baby, he folded his arms round his Emily, and murmured words of

happiness, content, and thanksgiving, mixed with prayers and petitions that in their new home, amid their new duties, they might deserve the happy peace that flooded their hearts this night with its overflow of emotion. While Emily, half smiles, half tears, blushing through both at his praises, poured upon John all her feelings on the subject : how he was so good, so clever, so sensible, with such a kind, loving heart, so that her fate could not be otherwise than that of the happiest of mortals ; and she should hope and pray that she might be worthy of such affection, and show her perception of it by making it the business of her life to be his helpmeet indeed, while the “beneficent Giver of all good” would hear her prayers and receive her thanksgivings.

Moreover, she further said, she blest the opportunity now given them of doing good ; that their lot had been cast in a place where her husband’s calm sense, clear judgment,



simple, holy character, would work their way into the hearts of the dense and mixed population surrounding them. His earnest, truthful manner, his quiet, simple ways, would give additional effect to the holy precepts ever on his lips, added to the constant performance of those virtues which he practised more than preached.

Thus blessed and blessing, thus praised and praising, each seemed to bring before the other the duties which belonged to the sphere of life in which they were placed, rather than their private affairs and wishes. Each forgot to mention any little thought or will of their own, while thinking of their more public duties and obligations. And if, O John and Emily, you seem too simple-minded, too short-sighted, for your own worldly welfare, and therefore cannot expect, if you pay so little attention to your own interests, that you should prosper in this world of strife for the uppermost

places—contention for the highest seats—struggles for the merest penny—this world of speech, but few deeds—this world that can give you everything but your place in heaven—this world that feeds its slaves with promises, and leaves them weeping in disappointment; and yet, nevertheless, is a good world for the hard-working, right thinking—a blessed world for those who look upon it as their battle-field in the Christian war-fight — if, O John and Emily, thus you mean to act, let us trace you through life, follow your paths through weal and woe, accompany you in every stage of life. Let us see if you suffered from thinking of others rather than yourselves, let us trace you through any difficulties or troubles your simplicity and single-heartedness may have plunged you into in dealing with this wise world. Let us watch if experience, so bitter sometimes, may not, by the rudeness of its shocks, have

opened your eyes, hardened your hearts, checked your enthusiasm, and made you worldly-wise at last. Let us see how it fared with you, your children, your fortunes, your health, your strength, your good report, your hopes of heaven, as you journey on your way there.

And this night we will leave you in the full enjoyment of your unsophisticated happiness: John blest in the possession of his "Sunbeam"—Emily thinking that no one but herself had "a John"—both glorying in the best, sweetest, most intelligent of babies, a large and commodious house, a magnificent income of 400*l.* per annum, the prospect of ample work among the vast populace at their door, of infinite labour, and no particular reward for it—Oh! John and Emily, who would not envy you?

## CHAPTER III.

“ The treasures of the deep are not so precious  
As are the concealed comforts of a man  
Locked up in woman’s love. I scent the air  
Of blessings when I come but near the house.”

MIDDLETON.

EARLY in the morning, being very active in his habits, John arose, and proceeded by himself to make an examination of his new abode. He looked into the drawing-room and shook his head—he looked into the dining-room and sighed audibly. He examined kitchens and closets, peeped into the cellars and dark holes, and, in fact, left not a single cranny unexplored.

That his morning's work had left no agreeable impression might be seen in his face as he met Emily coming down stairs to breakfast, baby crowing in her arms, and both looking as blooming and bright as flowers after rain.

*Emily.*—"Dear John, what a charming staircase this is, it is so wide and the steps are so low, baby will soon learn to crawl up and down them."

*John*, with his face full of cares and bothers.—"Yes, I must say it is a very handsome staircase, as you say, Emily; but I am sorry to tell you the rest of the house is in the most deplorable state——"

*Emily.*—"Come and have some breakfast first, John, before you tell me anything, because you have been downstairs such a long time and must require it. Baby and I were naughty, lazy people this morning, were we not, baby?"

Baby being in that happy mood she was

ready to agree to anything, they all sat down amicably to breakfast.

*John*—(between sips of tea, tastings of toast, and attentions to baby)—“Dear Emily, I learn that this house was built in six weeks, to receive the family of one of the rich ironmasters owning property here. I believe it is an accredited fact that, from the hour the first stone was laid to the minute the family entered into it—all complete, painted, papered, and furnished—but six weeks elapsed.”

John paused, both in breakfast and speech, that he might be ready to receive Emily's burst of dismay.

*Emily*.—“Dear John, how clever of them to do it so quickly.”

The burst of dismay clearly fell upon John himself. He looked at his wife in amazement for a minute, and then, with the slightest possible show of impatience, thus reproved her—

*John.*—"Is it possible, Emily, that you do not understand that it necessarily follows this house, represented to us as such an excellent one, is in reality badly built, hastily finished, and so rapidly put together that it only served the owner and builder for the four years he required it, and is now falling to pieces almost as speedily as it was raised!"

Poor John! he had rummaged and investigated his new home to so much purpose that his usually calm temperament was slightly ruffled—and then that Emily should reply so lightly!

*Emily*, with her best smile.—"Let us finish breakfast first, John, and then we will go over the house together. One thing is, however, quite certain—if the rest of the house is uncomfortable, this room is not. When all your books are put up, imagine how nice it will look; and see, how fortunate, the rain is pouring down—therefore we have nothing to do but employ ourselves



in the house. You shall unpack your books, and I will make myself a pretty drawing-room, to be ready when visitors come."

*John*, not quite recovered.—"Drawing-room! My dear love, you cannot have a drawing-room in this house. I never saw so wretched a room as what is called the drawing-room here, unless it is the dining-room."

*Emily*.—"I like very much making bad things better; so now, John, if you have finished, we will go and see these terrible rooms."

Truly, they looked most forlorn. The drawing-room was long, with three dull windows on one side, and a fourth at the end that had better have been dull, rather than disclose the ugly cinder-heap filled up so high as to obscure sun and heaven. The paper in various places hung in long tatters from the wall, proving indisputably how damp was the mortar beneath; and yet in

those places where it remained intact, it was even more unsightly, from the green and yellow mould that pervaded the once bright colours. In fact, the whole room had the appearance of suffering from a long and severe bilious attack. Not one window shut as had originally been designed by the carpenter, which made the wind sigh in melancholy little howls through the seams and warpings of the unseasoned wood. The door was guiltless of shutting without a bang that caused a shudder through the whole house, and made baby, a sage but astonished witness of the draught-blown tatters on the wall, scream with fright.

The chimney-piece and wall had evidently quarrelled, exhibiting such determination to cease partnership, that the former stood some inches out on one side, giving the spectator the irresistible notion that it was putting up its shoulders in a pet.

Dirty, dingy furniture, that had once

been showy, made this uninviting room look worse than if it had been empty.

*John.*—"There!"

A little mischief—rather more triumph—still greater vexation—was in that one word, uttered so significantly by John. But, as if Emily was to be put down by a word!

*Emily.*—"What a large room this is, John; think of my possessing so fine a drawing-room as—this will be."

'Twas lucky she made that pause and reservation.

*John.*—"Do you see this bank, Emily?"

*Emily.*—"Yes, dear, it looks as if it had been made, but no one could have done such an absurd thing, blocking up that window."

*John*, triumphantly.—"But it was made, it is made, it is making even now. Though there is a species of dirty green grass on it, Emily, it is wholly composed of cin-

ders or ashes from the furnaces; and, moreover, it goes all round our garden and field."

*Emily*.—"It appears to be flat on the top, John."

*John*.—"Yes, it is flat, and from end to end all round, it is nearly a mile."

*Emily*.—"And covered with this grass? Then, John, it will do for a nice dry walk."

John paused and looked at her. The idea pleased him; in fact, it was a hobby of his to walk to and fro on a level path when he was mentally composing his sermons. He brightened up, he looked at the great ugly embankment with interest. What holy, good, and pious thoughts might not that terrace of cinders bring to his mind! What food for his sermons—the glorious sky above—the ashes beneath. Emily knew in that pause of John's, in that one look of satisfaction, all that was

passing in his mind—knew full well that, for the future, every morning, before breakfast, John would take so many turns on that elevated station; where, on one side, he would look down upon his people, and on the other upon his home, and mingle prayers for both as he paced to and fro.

So, pleased and buoyant, she met the shock of the first appearance of the dining-room with great composure.

It was as large as the drawing-room; also with four windows, three of which were blocked up by dull, black, unwholesome-looking trees. It had stiff chairs in it, a stiff, frightful sofa, each covered with black horse-hair, so old and shiny, ice would have appeared more safe to sit upon. The paper was so far superior to the drawing-room that it had a decided attack of yellow jaundice, fast turning in corners and patches to the black state.

*Emily*, quickly.—“Well, now we will go upstairs, and then, John, I must leave you to order dinner.”

*John*.—“I knew, *Emily*, you would be shocked. Accustomed to have everything so beautiful and neat——.”

*Emily*.—“Which I mean to have here also, dear John. So I wont look at any more dismals now. Pray go and unpack your books, and if you please, John, may baby have her cradle in your snugery, for she will be going to sleep soon, and that will be the only haven into which we can put her? For nurse and I shall be making a dust and a riot all over the house, to unpack and settle things.”

John agreed willingly, and then they separated until dinner, at two o'clock; John beginning his unpacking with a heart as heavy as some of his books.

The rain poured unceasingly—John arranged his books unweariedly — baby slept

uninterruptedly, for the better part of three hours.

A peep into some of his favourite authors, the satisfaction of doing a good morning's work, and that innate feeling of rectitude and honest purpose which prompted John to do his duty, in whatever state he was placed, all combined to restore him to his usual state of calm happiness.

Hearing a little noise in the region of baby's cradle, he looked up from his books and saw her sitting upright in the cot, her little cheeks glowing with the bloom of sleep; while, with great sagacity and intelligence, she watched his proceedings—her blue eyes following the books out of their bed in the box up to their throne on the shelf.

“Good baby,” thought the father, “how sensible she looks! Ah! now, if she had only been a boy, what delight I should have had in teaching him Latin and Greek;



but I do not like to tell Emily so, lest it should hurt her dear heart. But, good as you are, baby, I wish you were a boy."

So saying, he approached her, with some vague notion that it was his duty to take her out of her bed.

But baby was more knowing than papa. She had not been placed topsy-turvy several times, and her head and limbs otherwise endangered by papa's awkward attempts at acting nurse (John was certainly the most inapt of parents), without becoming very averse to such breaches of decorum.

Accordingly, no sooner did papa attempt to take baby, bed, and blankets out together in a heap than she began to whimper. Hastily letting her drop again, he wisely rang the bell, and while waiting the answer to its summons, he coaxed her with the best sugared words he could think of. And she (worthy daughter of her mother) smiled as well as she could back again, poor

little innocent ; for papa, all unwotting, had placed her so that one leg was doubled under her, and one arm inextricably entangled in the bed-clothes.

“ Good little baby, your nurse is coming, my child, and then you shall have bread and milk. I have rung the bell, and perhaps dear mamma may come, and will say good baby may have sugar with her milk ! Your father loves you, my child, though you are not a boy, but a nice little girl, with your dear mamma’s eyes ! ”

How much baby was enlightened and amused by her father’s discourse, this chronicle hath no means of detailing truthfully. But, to judge by her delight at seeing her nurse’s face, I doubt it was greatly thrown away. And John seemed of the same mind, for an attentive listener might have heard him say to himself, with his quick, somewhat rueful shake of the head, “ Had she been a boy, I think I could have talked better.”

Dinner-time came at two o'clock, and with it Emily, all smiles and happiness. There was a dish of beefsteaks—John's peculiar fancy in the epicurean way; and while he partook thereof, he thought within himself, "I wonder if any one besides Emily, on this day of business and disappointments, would have thought of my favourite dish?"

He had not time to answer his own question, ere Emily said:—

"Do you know, John, I like the house being in this messy state, for it is so nice putting it to rights. And imagine how kind—Lord Bernard has sent down half-a-dozen of his workpeople, with orders that they are to do whatever I like. And I have set them all to work. Did you not hear a great deal of hammering and noise? I was so afraid it would tease you."

No. John had heard nothing.

*Emily.*—"Ah! John, how glad I am,

for that shows that though the house may have been finished in a hurry, yet the walls are thick, and were built before ; indeed, one of the workpeople told me it was once an old manor-house. So that it is only the inside that is ruined, from the paper being put on damp mortar, and the paint on unseasoned wood."

*John*.—"It may be as you say, Emily."

*Emily*.—"Oh, I am sure of it; and when I have put it to rights, it will be a charming house. Lord Bernard has ordered new papers to be brought for my choice, and I am to have fresh paint and varnish whenever I like. Is he not kind and thoughtful?—and oh, John, see!—Lady Bernard sent me these beautiful flowers, with radishes and salad for you, and such grapes! They shall be for us all, for baby shall taste them."

*John*.—"They seem very amiable people, Emily."

*Emily*.—"Oh, charming! We shall get

quite spoilt. Now, John, I must tell you some more good news. All the furniture my mother gave us, and which arrived ten days ago, has travelled without any injury to speak of, and it looks so fresh and pretty—but you must promise me one thing.”

*John*, looking a little dismayed, fearing a misfortune.—“I promise, Emily.”

*Emily*.—“Do not go into either dining or drawing-room until I give you leave. I wish to surprise you.”

John gave the promise most willingly. In fact, he had been so chilled and depressed by the sight of them, he was quite ready to vow he would never enter either of them again.

*Emily*.—“How nice your books look! But, oh! how stupid of me to forget that they would require dusting before they were put up. Look at the dust, John!”

*John*.—“My darling, it is my fault, not yours: I should have thought of it myself—you have had quite enough to do.”

*Emily.*—" Luckily it still rains, so that we cannot go out, and it will give us plenty of time."

*John.*—" Yes; therefore, if you will pursue what you have been about, I will devote the rest of the evening to repairing my mistake."

*Emily.*—" See, John, what a face baby makes at her grape—she does not like it. Ah, baby, what bad taste! But come—you shall be wrapped in a shawl, and tied in your chair; you shall sit in the room with mamma, and learn how to put it tidy."

So they departed, leaving John to dust; and while he did so, he said to himself—

" She even knows what baby would like best."

## CHAPTER IV.

“There'll be a coat o'er the chair,  
There will be slippers for somebody;  
There'll be a wife's tender care—  
Love's fond embracement for somebody.

“There'll be the little one's charms—  
Soon 'twill be wakened for somebody:  
When I have both in my arms.  
Oh! but how blest will be somebody!”

CHARLES SWAIN.

THE next day was fine; so John, immediately after breakfast, marched off on a tour of visits among his parishioners, fortified by Emily's best wishes.

Then Emily and her maids almost turned the house inside out. It was a mercy baby was not swept away as an atom of dust.



Heartily tired, but bright and cheerful as ever, in the evening Emily dressed herself in a little, simple, white cotton gown, and smoothing her curls until they looked all gold, she went, with wearied and slow steps, downstairs into the snuggerly to prepare tea for John, and to sit and have a good chat over all his adventures.

She was just in time (this, however, often happened with Emily), for John came in—all in a glow with exercise and kindly feeling, which extended into his heart of hearts as he peeped into the snuggerly, and saw the fair angel that brightened his hearth looking so delicate and pretty in her white dress, the languor of fatigue adding to the interest of her appearance.

John blessed her in his heart as he went upstairs to make himself fit to be seen by so fair a vision.

*Emily.*—“ Now, dearest John, I hope you have enjoyed your tea, as I have.

So I will recline in the old arm-chair; for I mean to do nothing, all this evening, but listen to your adventures."

John had truly enjoyed his tea, and, nothing loth to obey Emily's wishes, thus commenced:—

*John's adventures, with Emily's comments thereon.*

"In the first place, I went, of course, to the Castle, that I might in person thank Lord Bernard for the presentation to this living."

"Quite right, John."

"It is situated on a high eminence, about a mile from here, overlooking a vast amount of works, foundries, hills, and country. The view from it is of course much more curious than beautiful, for Lord Bernard is able almost, as it were, to look down into the yawning, fiery mouths of his furnaces. At night I can imagine nothing more wonderful."

“ I dare say it is, John—you know I told you we should be much struck with this country.”

John shook his head. He was doubtful whether all things wonderful were at the same time pleasant.

“ The Castle itself stands in so prominent a position that it must appear to even the smallest boy picking up cinders about the works to be watching him individually. It is built in a noble and bold style ; the stone roughly hewn, but of a close fine grain, and peculiarly tinted. Though not old, it is already moss-grown, which adds to the air of solidity and strength ; and it is sufficiently elevated above the reach of the smoke to retain its own gray colour. I went beneath an archway, large enough for a carriage to drive under, where was the door-bell, which I rang. This was speedily answered by a respectable-looking elderly

servant, dressed in black, with very white hair (John was always very precise), and two other servants also appeared, dressed in livery, I presume, as I saw much of their legs cased in white stockings. So I gave my card, on receiving which, and reading the name, the elderly servant bowed very politely; and waving away the others, I conclude, as they left immediately, he ushered me himself into a very handsome library. There, seated at a writing-table, was Lord Bernard, who came forward——”

“What is he like, John—is he handsome?”

“Why, I should say he was handsome, and young. About thirty, I should think; but I forgot, in the pleasure of conversing with him, to observe him much, because, you know, Emily, when I am interested——”

“Yes, I know, John.”

“ Well, he started so immediately into the subject of the parish and his people, that I thought of nothing else. His plans for their welfare and improvement, his ideas of schools for children and adults, his wishes and their non-fulfilment, his hopes and their disappointments, the various histories of my predecessors—ah, Emily, do you know I discovered not one of them stayed here three years—they could not bear the smoke.”

*Emily.*—“ Then they were stupid people, John—there must be smoke everywhere ; therefore, 'tis as well to learn to bear it.”

John, as usual, slowly shook his head, expressive of his doubtful mind, and then continued—

“ Neither did any of them get on well with the people.”

*Emily.*—“ Then they must have been still more stupid, John. Just fancy you

not getting on well with them, or their being able to prevent themselves liking and loving you ; but please go on."

" I sat with Lord Bernard more than an hour, and then he took me into the drawing-room to be introduced to his wife. She also is a young person——"

" Why, of course, dear John ; and is she pretty ? "

" She appeared to me very pretty indeed, and was very kind, asking so many questions about you, Emily——"

" And how was she dressed, John ? "

" Why, I liked her dress very much ; it seemed to me of a handsome stuff, and there were things about it that made it look very neat, and it was of a handsome colour—I should say——"

" And was she kind to you, John ? " interrupted Emily, remembering suddenly that John's ideas of dress were peculiar and incomprehensible to all but himself.

“Very much so indeed. But still they both seemed to have a doubtful kind of a way with them. I don’t think my predecessor could have acted very fairly by them.”

*Emily.*—“Oh, nonsense, John; perhaps he was old—delicate—or something of that sort, and so could not do as much as was required of him.”

“Perhaps so, love. But they gave me, at all events, but a sombre view of things in general, and the people in particular; even to saying so much as that he could not hope I should be long on terms with all my parishioners.”

*Emily.*—“John! he did not know you!”  
(*sotto voce.*)

“In fact, my dear Emily, I saw that they were doubtful about my liking the place and remaining here, when I fully saw all the difficulties of my position, and the various annoyances I should daily meet



with. And speaking under this idea, Lord Bernard openly said he was sorry to hear I had brought my wife. I should have done better to have come here for three months by myself——”

“Without me, John—how unhappy and uncomfortable you would have been!”

“True, most true, my Emily; but still I somewhat agree with him, and I think this may prove no place for one so delicately nurtured and cared for, so accustomed to all refinements, and——”

*Emily.*—“Pooh, pooh, it is a very nice place, and there are sure to be nice people in it, and I care for none of those things you talk about—only for you, John.”

“God love and bless my darling! I know your unselfish nature full well. So I will only say, all their remarks proceeded from evident kindness to us; and I was to give Lady Bernard’s best regards to you, and she would not call upon you this week,

thinking she might be in your way. But early in next week, when you would be somewhat settled, she would come. Then I took the opportunity, Emily, of thanking her for all the presents she sent us yesterday——”

“Good John !”

“And told her how much they were appreciated——”

“By all but baby.”

“And then I went with Lord Bernard down to the works, and he introduced me to his head-man, or superintendent of the works, Mr. Robarts, who again introduced me to so many clerks and superintendents that I was much bewildered, and can hardly recall them.”

*Emily.*—“Never mind, John—what is Mr. Robarts like ?”

“He is a very nice person indeed, with a frank, jovial manner, and bright, intelligent eyes that see everything in a minute.

He speaks a little too fast—I could not quite follow him, but it is impossible not to be pleased with him. I went with him to his house to partake of his early dinner, and he introduced me to his wife. Do you know, Emily, she is almost as pretty as you and your sister.”

*Emily.*—“I am so glad!”

“They appear to have four or five little girls, very pretty to look at, but I suppose not quite old enough to be well-mannered; and, Emily, dear——”

*Emily.*—“Yes, John?”

“I hope you will not suffer your daughter to have stiff curls, and wear little petticoats very short—up to here, many of them——”

*Emily.*—“Dear, blind John, those must have been frills.”

“Perhaps so, Emily; but whatever they were, I did not admire them. Also—also—I hope——”

*Emily.*—"What, dear John?" seeing he paused and sighed.

"A curious idea entered my head, Emily. Mrs. Robarts has so many daughters, and not one son; for I asked——"

*Emily.*—"Well, John?"

"Well, Emily, I don't quite like that."

*Emily.*—"How can she help it?"

"I know, love, I know; but so many daughters and no son, it would make me very uncomfortable, Emily."

*Emily.*—"Now, that is very unlike you—you know you would be very comfortable with them, and love them very much. But pray proceed."

"I went afterwards to the doctor's house, who is obliged to keep four assistants. There are often sad and infectious fevers among the people, and still more often dangerous and shocking accidents. He seems a very nice person indeed, combining, I should say, strong practical sense with great kind-

ness of heart ; and as for his wife, Mrs. Dawson, my dear Emily, you will soon love her. There is something so natural, so kind, so maternal about her, that I felt quite at home immediately ; and she asked after you with such tenderness of feeling, I was quite struck. And do you know, Emily, she has a son ! ”

“ Really, John, I am glad to hear it,” and she nodded her little dear head in a sort of half saucy way, as much as to say, “ You see sons are born here as well as daughters.”

“ Lord Bernard gives Dr. Dawson a thousand a-year, with a house—and very hard he has to work for it, Emily.”

“ I have no doubt of it, John.”

Oh ! John and Emily, does it not strike you what injustice it was giving a doctor a thousand a-year to heal people’s bodies, and you thought yourselves so well repaid in receiving three hundred per annum for

curing their souls? I am afraid few will have a good opinion of John and Emily after this. But pray, dear readers, be patient. No doubt, in the course of this history we shall come to something like wordly wisdom in their doings. At least, we will hope so.

“ I paid one more visit, Emily, to a single lady of the name of Charles. I don’t quite know what her age may be, but she talked a great deal. I told her I was then going among the cottages, and she—she—that is—I am afraid I must say I was not much taken with her.”

*Emily.*—“ Oh ! you will, John, by-and-by ; first sight is sometimes deceiving.”

“ I don’t quite think so, in this case. She was not good-natured in her remarks. She said I might go once to these cottages, but she would be bound—that was her phrase, Emily ; and besides she has a loud voice—”

“Poor John—was she nice looking?”

“She is large and fat, and has a voice like a man’s. But now, my wife, I mean to tell you no more. I must have you go to bed, because—because you appear fatigued; and I must be careful of a life so precious to me—the world and its contents could not repay me for one single day’s loss of it.”

Having made so free with Mr. Leslie’s private communications to his wife, it is but fair that we should take a peep into other people’s confidences. So we will go into Lady Bernard’s boudoir, and, establishing ourselves as flies on the wall, hear what she is saying to her husband.

This boudoir was upstairs, situated in the very centre of the Castle, being, in fact, of the dimensions of the square turret that formed a sort of keep. A large oriel window filled up one side of



the room. From this window you looked down upon a garden, ruled under the especial sway of the Lady Bernard. Therefore it indulged in various feminine vagaries. No two beds matched, and the fountain was not in the centre, while, so far from all the four rockeries being at the opposite corners (as if so placed that they might, during leisure moments, indulge in a game of puss-in-the corner), they were up and down anywhere. From out of one bubbled a sparkling fountain, that reposed itself for a quiet moment in a large, mis-shapen moss-grown stone basin, on the rim of which, look at whatever hour of the day you chose, a bird or birds might be seen sitting. The boundary of this garden was formed by a thick wood of oak and larch, from whence came sounds of melody, enlivening it with gay carols of black-birds and thrushes; startling it with the

wild call and noisy flutter of the pheasant (then a rare and petted bird, too valuable to be shot or eaten), while, as evening fell, the ring-dove would coo in soft melancholy strains. Higher and higher rose the wood of oak and larch, so that the next thing you saw above it was the blue Welsh hills, and beyond and above them the ever-changing heavens.

The boudoir was furnished with oak—so old, it was quite dark; and to enliven it the curtains were of crimson cloth, with a broad border of oak-leaves and acorns, embroidered in silk of dead gold colour. A few airy, delightful, and easy chairs (for such luxuries were rare in those days), some straight-backed old-fashioned ones, a small sofa, a piano and writing-table, composed the furniture, excepting a low bookcase running half round the room. But there was a great quantity of ladies' objects of veneration—old china, ornamental bronzes,

sculpture, pictures, some very valuable, others only regarded as such from feelings of sympathy or remembrance. These were scattered about the room, without much attention to order; and mixed with them might be seen a vase of fresh flowers, a pot of violets, another of mignonette, while a gorgeous cactus blazed in the window. But amid everything were seen bales of flannel, Welsh petticoats, and checked stuff, with yarn and hose, and various other articles of dress, that required much more than a pot of mignonette to overcome the prevailing odour.

“My dear wife, may I come in?” said a voice at the door; and Lord Bernard entered without further ceremony, and was preparing to seat himself in a chair that looked peculiarly his own, when he paused. A dilating of the nostrils gave notice to Lady Bernard what would be his remark.

“Surely I smell a strange, oily, not to say woolly scentification.”

His wife laughed and said—

“You are quite right—I have poisoned the room by having all this Welsh stuff in it, which it seems cannot be made good without bearing an odour very much the reverse. I will ring to have it removed, and will open the windows.”

“I despise nothing Welsh, but I feel happy that you don’t oblige me to clothe myself in such odoriferous stuff.”

“Don’t despise it. There is nothing like Welsh stuff for wearing—and the more it is washed the better it is. Besides, it is home-spun.”

“Then, I say, let it always be washing. But now it is gone, listen, my lady—I like him.”

*Lady Bernard.* — “So do I, Henry. At first I was rather disappointed in his

personal appearance. There is nothing in it to strike you, or to give effect to anything he might say; but when he begins to talk, and when in his excitement he removed his spectacles, what wonderful intelligence his eyes expressed!"

*Lord B.*—"For the first ten minutes after I saw him I was disappointed also. There was something so extremely simple and unpretending in his manner, I immediately set him down for a bit of a goose. I did not even give him credit for being something of a pedantic one either."

*Lady B.*—"I rather like one being disappointed at first. For do you remember how fascinated we were by Mr. Willis? His manners were so polished, he was so full of suavity and gentleness, we thought we had obtained the true Christian apostle we required for our difficult people."

*Lord B.*—"And what an ill-natured fellow he turned out to be! In remembrance of

my mistake about him, I will not be too sanguine regarding Mr. Leslie. But I own I am greatly disappointed that he is so young. He is not more than four-and-twenty."

*Lady B.*—"No more! But do not grieve about that, for he looks thirty at the very least. He gives me the idea of being the child of very old parents, and, having no brothers or sisters, he has been brought up in an old-fashioned, grave way, unknowing what it is to be a child."

(Lady Bernard, your discrimination is wonderful).

*Lord B.*—"I agree with you in thinking he looks older than he is, so I will disturb myself no more about that matter, until he does some foolish thing more befitting twenty-four than thirty. But his wife, my dear Kate, how are we to get over this difficulty? For it is as necessary she should be sensible, well-educated,

and fitted for her duties here as he should be. And—she is only nineteen; besides, I hear, strikingly pretty.”

*Lady B.*—“ I do not see why she need be ugly to be a clergyman’s wife, Henry.”

*Lord B.*—“ Neither do I mean to carry my ideas of her qualifications for her duties to such an extent. But after seeing Mr. Leslie, I think he appears to me exactly the sort of simple man who would be taken in by a pretty, showy, lively, empty-headed girl.”

*Lady B.*—“ Now, do you know I differ from you. I think under all that simplicity and gravity there runs a quiet vein of humour, and a thorough knowledge of people, in Mr. Leslie. To my fancy, his wife will be a brisk, handsome, active country girl, used to rough it, capable of making pies and puddings, and turning her hand to anything, and looking as old as he does.”

(Lady Bernard, this time your discrimi-



nation is at fault. Fancy, dear readers, our Emily brisk and countrified !)

*Lord B.*—"Humph ! our opinions certainly differ, and we shall not see which is the truest until Sunday. Therefore, if you won't think me profane, Kate, I shall go rather early, and see how she walks into church. If she comes fluttering and fussing up the aisle I shall consider I am victorious. If she stalks up with a heavy foot, a business-like look, that seems of itself to say, 'I am the clergyman's better half,' then I yield the palm to you. Meanwhile, I return to my first song, and will sing it again. I 'like him, and I hope, ardently, truly, that our people will also.'"

*Lady B.*—"I hope poor Mrs. Leslie will not be in either of the extremes you mention ; for it will be a great drawback to me if she is a vulgar, fussy woman. Mrs. Willis was an amiable, lady-like person, and I miss her much. Mrs. Robarts is of no use to me ;

her girls occupy her sole thoughts—and wherefore they are to be made so accomplished is a mystery to me. They will be pretty, elegant girls if she will permit them to grow up as nature intended, and educate them sufficiently for the clerks and people among whom they were brought up.”

*Lord B.*—“My dear Kate! where is your discrimination? No daughter of Mrs. Robarts’ is ever to marry a clerk! She is always telling me of the pains and trouble she is taking with them, and always adds, ‘I shall make them fit to adorn any society, however high.’”

*Lady B.*—“You are getting satirical, Henry. However, she is a weak woman, and of no assistance to me. Miss Charles always makes me ‘eat dirt,’ as the Turks say, whenever I go near her. Dear Goody Dawson is too good and kind: I never have the heart to tax her with anything, knowing she does a great deal more than she ought

of her own accord ; while the Miss Hills have so many claims in their own valley, I think it unfair to trouble them. So, if Mrs. Leslie does not prove an assistant to me, cheerful and willing, I shall consider my case hard."

*Lord B.*—"And I am even more anxious that she should prove so ; for I know a good woman, not a hundred miles off, who does much more than she ought, and whose tender heart is far too severely tried, whenever we visit our wild Welsh home."

*Lady B.*—"Ah, Henry, we suffer together. You are as anxious as myself. If it should please God that we prove fortunate in our choice of Mr. Leslie, it will be a great blessing ; and, having been hitherto so unhappy in our selection, I trust it is in no murmuring spirit that we are thus fearful of his success, and rather wearied with our many failures."

*Lord B.*—"Do not, however, think, Kate, that the failure rests wholly with ourselves—

some part must be imputed to the people themselves. They are such a mixed multitude—of so many creeds, opinions, customs, and manners—I really think an archangel from heaven would be dubious about undertaking the charge of them.”

*Lady B.*—“Nay, that is a very dispiriting view of the case. I shall hope, instead, that Mr. Leslie may prove that mild, sagacious character who, by ‘being all things to all men,’ may gain some among our people. Our prayers shall not be wanting for his success: meanwhile, love, worry yourself no more. I hear the merry footsteps of our boys, just come in from their walk. Here they are!”

*Lord B.*—“Hah, my boys! and where have you been?”

“Papa,” said the eldest, named Frank, and about six years old, “we have been up the hill, and found these cowslips.”

“And,” said the little one, Walter—four years old—“we are going to make tissity-tossities.”

“And pray, what may be the meaning of tissity-tossities?” asked their father.

“Balls, papa,” said Frank, rather in contemptuous tones, as if he pitied his father’s ignorance. “Even Walter can help to make a cowslip-ball.”

“Then Walter is more clever than I am. I suppose they were not invented when I was young.”

“Poor papa!—and we met a gentleman who helped us to gather them,” said Frank.

“And, papa, he had windows on his eyes,” said Walter—“little round windows.”

“Ha, ha!—so, Walter, you do not know what spectacles are? Did the gentleman speak to you?”

“Oh, yes! he asked if I had begun Latin, and he told us a story of Androcles and the Lion.”

“Come—you remember the name very well, and it is a hard one.”

“Because, papa, the gentleman said it was

a true story, and it was of no use my hearing it unless I remembered it. So he did not tell me the story until I could say the name perfectly."

"That was very kind of him. Did he tell you his name?"

"No, papa; but after he was gone nurse said he was called Mr. Leslie, and was our new clergyman."

"How did she find that out?"

"Because, papa, he spoke to nurse first, and asked leave to tell us this story; and afterwards, he said to her, 'The view from the hills is very beautiful, Mrs. Nurse, and leads us to think of the God who made it;' and nurse curtsied, and said, 'Yes, sir;' and when he was gone, she then said he must be the clergyman, because he talked of God."

"I think nurse was right; and did you like him?"

"Oh, yes, papa—he was so merry when he gathered the cowslips!—and he took off

his little windows to show Walter, who was astonished at them. And nurse likes him too: she said she was sure he was a good man."

"There, Kate—I hope you hear this with satisfaction. Mr. Leslie has already, in his quiet way, won three hearts."

"May he be as successful in all others; but it proves, Henry, that his disposition is what I hoped. Merry with the boys, so nice and condescending to nurse, my text will be verified—'He will become all things to all men, so that, by any means, he may win some.'"

"Take it then, Kate, for your watch-word: on Sunday, when I have seen Mrs. Leslie, I will tell you mine. So now, little boys, teach papa how to make a tossity-tassity."

"Papa! a tissity-tossity, if you please."



## CHAPTER V.

“I see a beauteous vale  
Embosomed in the mountains, whose proud height  
Seems like a pinnacle for Time to sit  
And watch his generations. In that vale,  
Seeming the very resting-place of grace,  
The homes of men are scattered.”

CONSTANTIA LOUISA RIDDELL.

Now we must take our station on the wall of the domestic parlour of the Robarts's. But they had other rooms. Oh, of course! Who could imagine that Mrs. Robarts had not a very fine drawing-room, and excellent dining-room, both twenty-eight feet long, by twenty wide? Only this parlour was the domestic one: in the day time, sacred to the many

accomplishments necessary for the education of the Miss Robarts'; in the evening, when tea was over, the young ladies safe in bed, the governess upstairs writing to her friends, sacred to Mr. and Mrs. Robarts alone—except just this evening, when there are certain flies on the wall.

Mr. Robarts is reading the newspaper—not a fine, large, well-printed, well-pressed paper, such as we have now-a-days, but a small one, of a yellow hue, smelling unpleasingly of printer's ink, and very badly printed withal. Mrs. Robarts had four little straw hats before her, with a great deal of ribbon.

“Heavens! how iron is rising!” said Mr. Robarts. “Jane, we shall be as rich as Cræsus!”

“I am very glad of it, Jaspar, for indeed we require it. This ribbon is three shillings a-yard.”

“Why do you buy it, then?” asked he.

*Mrs. R.*—“Because I must have the chil-

dren look nice on Sunday, for the new clergyman and his wife will be sure to notice them ; at least, she will—she is of very good family.”

*Mr. R.*—“ I like Mr. Leslie, Jane, very much.”

*Mrs. R.*—“ Did you, Jaspar ? I cannot say I did. He took very little notice of our girls, beyond asking Ellen if she could read the Bible ; and, you know, Jane and Maria play so prettily on the piano.”

*Mr. R.* — “ He told me, Jane, that he thought you a very pretty woman, so he might be looking too much at you to see your daughters. I guess, from his admiring you so much, his own wife is but ordinary-looking.”

*Mrs. R.* (mollified). — “ Perhaps she is, dear, and perhaps she has no children, which might make him a little chary of looking at our pretty girls.”

*Mr. R.*—“ I daresay by-and-by I shall be able to spare him a few, eh, Jane ? ”

*Mrs. R.*—"Spare one! Never, Jaspar! My precious girls!—every hair of their heads is valuable to me."

*Mr. R.*—"My dear, you know you are very ridiculous about those children; for, besides wearing yourself to death for their sakes, I have no pleasure in their society: Ellen must not go out when the sun shines, because she freckles so—Jane must not ride with me, for fear it should make her crooked—and little Maria is all day long at her piano. The baby is the only child I am allowed to consider my own—and I shall lose her, I suppose, when she begins to learn her letters."

*Mrs. R.*—"Do not be cross, Jaspar; I must do my duty as a mother. Our children are very much gifted by nature, for you rarely see such pretty ones as our two eldest girls. I wonder you do not look a little forward, and see why I take such pains with their education and accomplishments."

*Mr. R.*—"Not I, faith, Jane. I look no further forward than that they should have the same fate as their mother; and they may think themselves lucky if they all get husbands among the clerks of the ironworks."

*Mrs. R.*—"Hush, Jaspar, you are the superintendent—in fact, head man, next to my lord himself. We are second only in rank and station to the Castle; and therefore, if I look forward a dozen years or so, I don't see why we shouldn't be on a par, or why my sweet girls should not mate accordingly."

*Mr. R.*—"Oh, that is it—pretty castle-building indeed! However, build away, only don't kill yourself and overwork the girls in so doing, for I feel pretty sure you won't succeed."

*Mrs. R.*—"Don't be unkind, Jaspar; you will put me in low spirits."

*Mr. R.*—"Which is the last thing I

should wish to do. I hope Mrs. Leslie will prove a nice stirring body, who will cheer you up a bit, Jane."

*Mrs. R.*—"I am sure I am sadly in want of a kind female friend, who will sympathize with me, and enter into all my feelings as a mother. My lady is very kind, but of course I could not expect her to be what I want. Mrs. Dawson is very good, but so wrapt up in making caudle and flannel petticoats for the poor, that one might as well make a friend of a basin of gruel. And that boy Jeffreys is very forward, calling the girls by their Christian names, and even kissing little Maria."

*Mr. R.* (slyly)—"There is Miss Charles, my dear."

*Mrs. R.*—"Odious creature, I have often said, and now I will promise myself never to enter her doors again: she has actually put it about that Mam'selle is a

papist; and she took hold of my new poplin dress last Sunday, and asked if it was my old green silk dyed—and she did so just as the Bernards were going by.”

*Mr. R.*—“She has a long tongue, certainly, I wonder it has got her into no mischief. I saw Mr. Leslie was rather more surprised than pleased at her when I introduced him.”

*Mrs. R.*—“That shows he is a man of sense, and at all events that his wife will not be like her. I shall not be able to see her until Sunday, as I hear Lady Bernard is not going to call at the parsonage until next week; so I shall do the same. I shall know in a minute if she will suit me, by the style of her dress.”

*Mr. R.*—“Then women are sharper than men. I never noticed how Mr. Leslie was dressed—I only looked at his nice



honest countenance. So I shall say good night. I presume you will be in bed before the morning, if you would not rather sit up all night than let your daughters go simply dressed to church."

Mrs. Robarts was irritated at this last remark, and his shutting the door with a bang that shook her weak nerves. So she determined to finish trimming the hats, tired as she was. Therefore the flies on the wall left her, before they had time to discover if all this sitting up, fatigue, and trimming answered her expectations; and went to pay two, luckily but short, visits, as follows:—

"Dolly," said Dr. Dawson, as he was putting on his night-cap, "would it not be kind of you to go to-morrow and see if you can help Mrs. Leslie. That nice-spoken, worthy young man, her husband, as good as told me she was only nineteen."

“ I wrote to her to-day, doctor, to offer my services; and I am to go to her to-morrow to assist. She wrote me such a pretty answer—and here it is.”

“ A very pretty letter, indeed,” answered the doctor, after perusing it; “ and no nonsense in it. But she must be a sensible young woman, to have discerned that my Dolly was a treasure, without having seen her.”

“ Have done with your nonsense, doctor. You see she puts the pleasure of seeing me more to the fact that she would like to be at home among us all as soon as possible.”

“ Very right; besides she can be no fool for all she is so young—for that nice young man, who has quite taken my heart with his free, kind manner, is far too knowing to have married such, Dolly.”

“ They are much too young, to my thinking, for this place, doctor, so we must

help them all we can. Meantime, we shall be able to judge better when we have heard his first sermon."

The last speech was lost on the doctor—he was already snoring.

"Dear me, what a man the doctor is for sleeping; and yet if I tell him there's a woman taken ill——."

"Hilloo, Dolly, who's ill?—give me my clothes."

"No, no, doctor, sleep comfortably. I was only talking to myself, just saying—bless me, he is snoring again!"

The last visit was to Miss Charles; and then, dear reader, we will go to bed also—for I feel sure you are as tired as I am of clinging to the walls and listening to so many conversations.

Miss Charles sat in a large arm-chair, robed in a huge dressing-gown. If she did not look handsome in Mr. Leslie's eyes when adorned for the day, it is hardly

necessary to say that now she was still less so.

By her side was a table—on that table smoked a capacious cup, steaming and savoury. Before Miss Charles stood a comely wench, robust and strong, with bright black eyes and round rosy cheeks. A waiter being in her hand, she had evidently just brought up Miss Charles' "night-cap."

"Ay, Betty, but I doubt ye hae made this owre strong." Miss Charles came from canny Newcastle, where the language in common use is a species of Scotch and English, mixed with its own peculiar burr. Now, the burr is a weakness possessed by the Newcastle people, that utterly incapacitates them from pronouncing the "R" among the letters of the alphabet. Either they make it sound like a cluster of many "R's," or they decline pronouncing it altogether, substituting a "W" in its place.

Miss Charles luckily had not the burr to graft on her Scotch and English mixture; but she had some peculiarities in her parts of speech, belonging solely to herself, which rendered it a matter of thankfulness, to those who wished to understand her, that she had escaped the burr altogether.

“Owre strong!” says Betty, who had the burr in perfection. “Never, noo.”

“Dinna fash, woman, I’ll tak’ it this night to drink our new minister’s health, Betty.”

“Ou, ay ye mun do it, forbye he is to tak us oop to hiven in his skeerts.”

“Did ye see him, Betty?”

“Ay, missus, I letted him in.”

“Did he speak till ye, Betty?”

“Ou, ay, most ceevil and neighborly. He’ll be a guid young mon, I’m thinking, missus.”

“He’s owre young, Betty.”

“But we must sit under wha we can get, missus.”

“He has gotten a wife, Betty.”

“Ay, so they say ; and the carpenter up till the house, amending the windy shuts, tells me she’s that bonny——”

“Ye hussie, dar ye gang speak to a carpenter? Oh ye idle taupee, I’ll hae ye pit in the kitty if I hear tell o’ ony sich doings. Gang yer ways to bed. I wad hae gi’en ye a sip of thon to drink the new minister’s health, but ye dinna deserve it, ye hussie ; and nae less, I dinna think he or his wife are ony great shakes—I’m thinking I’ll hae nae respect to the wan or the tother.”

Betty looked as sorrowful as she could under this rebuke, and the knowledge that within the same pan that had brewed the savoury decoction was a little sup left that would not go into Miss Charles’s cup, and which, no doubt, was just simmering on the fire at that identical moment.

So she tucked Miss Charles into bed,

with a meek “Guid night, missus, and sweet dreams till ye;” and then, taking up the candle, departed. And presuming she went straight to bed, as she was bid, so will we, dear reader.



## CHAPTER VI.

“He was a shepherd, and no mercenary ;  
And though he holy was and virtuous,  
He was to sinful men full piteous.  
His words were strong, but not with anger fraught—  
A love benignant he discreetly taught ;  
To draw mankind to heaven by gentleness  
And good example was his business.”

CHAUCER.

JOHN pursued his visits, Emily her unpacking and setting in order, and Mrs. Dawson came to help her.

If Emily was disposed to like Mrs. Dawson from John's account, think what Mrs. Dawson thought of Emily. Words will not express it ; but from that time began a

friendship which lasted—(nay, I must not tell, for, by so doing, I may let out part of the history that must be told in its proper place—or I may alarm my readers by hinting at the number of years they will have to travel with me through this domestic narrative, so I will say—nothing.)

Jeffreys, Mrs. Dawson's son, also came to help at the unpacking, and fell violently in love with baby. He was eight years old, and was already the victim of a misplaced attachment to one of the Miss Robarts, having been forbidden the house because he was discovered saluting her baby's cheek. Therefore, it was with feelings of the most ardent delight that he discovered he was not indifferent to the new object of his attachment. She stared at him resolutely for five minutes at a time, making his great cheeks blush again, until the dull red went up into the roots of his hair. Also she took pleasant liberties with him

—pulling his hair, and putting her fingers into his great blue eyes.

Jeffreys was not a handsome boy; on the contrary, he was very ugly, and no wonder little Adeline was amazed at his eyes, and irresistibly inclined to investigate their nature—for they were nearly as large as saucers, and of a light, unmeaning blue. Mr. Leslie tried to look at him with pleasure, because he was a boy, and also because he was such a good-natured one. But he mentally thought — “If Emily ever gives me a boy, I trust it will not be like Jeffreys.” N.B.—To be the father of a boy was John’s ardent but secret hope.

And now Sunday morning came. That day to be of great events. Little did Emily think, as she tripped downstairs in her spotless dress of white India muslin, trimmed with lace round the throat and sleeves—little did

she think how many eyes were to be fixed upon her, as she went into the house of God, full only of her own innocent and pious thoughts. Eyes of observation, critical eyes, curious eyes, unkind, severe eyes—perhaps eyes that became envious as they looked. But at present no wonder she came downstairs with such a bright face ; John was to see the rooms—that unhappy drawing-room and morose dining-room, the existence of which he had tried to forget.

If ever a husband was astonished and amazed, that husband was John. For a moment or two he felt inclined to assert positively that those were not *the* dining-room and drawing-room. However, a decided and strong smell of paint, a few local and unmistakable points established the fact ; and then John admired and wondered, to the heart's content of his wife. But we must describe them.

The paper covering the drawing-room walls had been changed from its bilious nondescript pattern into one with a white ground, upon which was represented a trellis work, up and down, under and over which climbed roses of various hues, so fresh and natural-looking that but for the paint John could have vowed he smelt them. The end window, with its bold view of the cinder heap, was covered with a transparent blind, through which shone, bright and cheerful, a glowing landscape, with a sparkling waterfall. (Fifty years ago, my dear reader, such ornaments were considered quite the thing, even if there were nothing to hide behind). The dilapidated window-frames had, by dint of putty, paint, and mending, become wind-proof and steady, besides clean and fresh-looking, in their white paint, marked out with lines of green. All the furniture had been scrubbed, re-

arranged, and brightened; while what was too shabby was taken away, and new substituted, that they had brought with them. A carpet of a dark myrtle green ground, with leaves of a lighter green scattered over it, gave a fresh spring-like appearance to the room; while the chintz that covered the chairs and sofas, and adorned the windows in the shape of curtains, was of a gay appearance, something matching the paper. Various little feminine nick-nacks were scattered about, with a little rare old china that had belonged to John's mother.

No wonder John doubted if this was the same room—and how Emily did enjoy his doubts!

The dining-room gave equal astonishment and delight. The walls were covered with a handsome red flock paper, upon which hung, with the utmost cordiality, side by side, his father and mother, and Emily's

father and mother—that is, their pictures large as life. Besides a valuable Vandyck, and a picture of St. Cecilia, piously looking up to heaven, and playing on a fiddle at the same time.

Opposite her was a dark picture, portraying a boy holding a candle, the red glare of which lighted up his face on the broad grin. Besides these pictures, there were one or two good prints—and the whole added greatly to the handsome appearance of the room. Curtains, of a dark maroon colour, cast a ruddy shadow on everything, making them look warm and comfortable; while a bright blazing fire, and the nice breakfast, completed the picture. The room being fitted up with oak, no paint had been used; so it was ready to occupy this very day. In addition to the proper dining-room furniture, it had a sofa and two arm-chairs, into one of which John now dropped, quite exhausted with admiration—while Emily took the other,



beaming with delight. Then, being a little recovered as she gave John his breakfast, she also related the full and particular history of how this transformation was accomplished.

But time flies. It is nearly church time; and she now adds to her toilette a little white tippet and a little chip-hat, with fresh white strings and bows.

John and Emily had a faculty of always being ready before the time rather than after it, if there was anything to be done. In fact, if John was fidgety about anything, it was punctuality; and he was not to be blamed for it, especially now—for he naturally wished to place Emily in her pew, and to find out from the clerk if there were any peculiar modes of doing the service—anything added or omitted in his new church.

Not that those were High-Church days. Many a thing was cut out then—many liberties taken to curtail the prayer-book, and but few to strain its every word, as is now

the fashion. But this is not a book meant to contain religious discussions : I merely wish my readers to prepare for the fact that, early as Lord Bernard was in attending church, for the profane purpose of watching how Mrs. Leslie walked up the aisle, he was too late ; she had been full five minutes seated in her pew ere he arrived. And from the Castle pew there was nought to be seen in that belonging to the parsonage but one corner, in which Mrs. Leslie was not.

So there was nothing to prevent him paying undivided attention to the service ; and in listening to the earnest, well modulated tones of Mr. Leslie's voice, he felt no inclination to think of any other matter.

It was a persuasive, melodious voice—every sentence spoken as if felt ; and among that numerous congregation it seemed to many that this time, led by such earnestness, they had “prayed with their hearts,” and “not with their lips only.”

And when—the church service concluded—Mr. Leslie appeared for the first time in the pulpit before his parishioners, no one, as they looked, considered him a plain, simple young man. His spectacles no longer obscured his fine eyes—his countenance was bright with warm, earnest feelings—and more mellow and persuasive did his words appear as he turned a loving gaze on his new parishioners, and spoke thus:—

“In the 12th chapter of the 2nd epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, at the 15th verse, you will find these words—

“‘I will very gladly spend, and be spent, for you.’

“Beloved brethren, these words are spoken by me in the same spirit, with the same meaning, as St. Paul said them: not lightly, not after the manner of a text which has to be expounded to you, but as an offer from me to you, and which I shall trust to you to accept in the fulness with which it is proffered for

your so doing. To-day sees the commencement of a connexion between us that may be severed shortly, and may last for years. Yet, to me, however short or long it may be, the feeling that I was your pastor, the knowledge that you were my people, will remain with me to the latest breath of my life; while you will, I trust, so far help me with your prayers to the throne of the Almighty God, that so long as I dwell among you, the words of my text may be my ruling guide, may be the principle that shall govern all the actions of my life.

“It is no light thing that we have either of us taken in hand this day. At my ordination, I vowed a vow that I would give faithful diligence always to administer the Doctrine, and Sacraments, and Discipline of our Church, as the Lord hath commanded me, and as that Church and realm of England hath received the same — so that I may teach the people committed to

my charge, with diligence to keep and observe them. On the great day of judgment it will be asked of me, 'Have you kept your vow?' Then must I give an account of my stewardship—then shall I have to acknowledge before the face of the Almighty that these words, 'I will very gladly spend and be spent for you,' were not lightly spoken, but came from my heart—have been acted upon, used and not abused. That they indeed proved to be my ruling desire. That I went about among you, wishing, seeking, asking for your love and confidence—that amid this numerous and vast congregation I was willing to be looked upon as the friend of all. That you might consider me as one whom you could trust as a brother, one who wishes and means to be part of yourselves, if you will. One who will mourn with those that mourn, and rejoice with those in happiness. An adviser, a consoler, an assistant, a friend, a

pastor. Not only here in this house of God, where my first duty commences, but in your homes, your cottages, in the fields, on the hill, by the way-side. At all hours, at all times, I feel, I wish, I desire 'to spend and be spent for you.' And thus would I wish to be able to speak at the foot of our Saviour's cross.

"This is the task that I vow to myself to do this day.

"And you, beloved brethren (I use this term not from custom, but truly from a desire to love and be loved by you), you also have your duty to perform, in this solemn compact between us. You have been charged by God, in the words of St. Paul, to obey those who have the Christian rule over you, and to submit yourselves to them. For they have to watch for your souls, as those who must give an account of the same. On the great day of judgment you also will appear, and it will be

asked of you if you have obeyed the words of your catechism, which from your earliest infancy taught you to submit to your spiritual pastors. If you have obeyed his precepts, met him in this house of prayer, listened to and heeded the commands of God which had been read and explained to you from this place, made him your friend, besought his spiritual help, and finally assisting him with your earnest prayers that he might indeed fulfil the promise he makes this day, 'to spend and be spent for you,' so cement the bond of love that commences this day that it never may be broken, but even at that awful hour and time may still exist strong and loving between us.

“Thus we are bound together—in this compact we enter to-day, by every tie of interest, responsibility, and love. Yes, love; for as we mutually assist each other, as I spend and am spent, and as you receive,



hearken, and do, so will our affection draw us closer and closer together, until we meet at the feet of Jesus.

“Therefore, from this day, let me consider that an intimate connection, a friendly feeling, subsists between me and all—yes, all—from the highest to the lowest, from the oldest to the youngest, that are classed among my parishioners.

“There is nothing on earth so sweet as affection, sympathy, and Christian love. There is no virtue more strongly inculcated in the Holy Bible. Nothing is more lasting, for it is everlasting, and the blessings of Paradise are founded upon it. It buds upon earth, but it blooms in heaven; and the more strongly we strengthen the plant here, diligently watering and cherishing it, so many more flowers will it bring forth in the celestial gardens of Eternity!

“So, brethren, the ties between us are thus :—

“Without your help, your prayers, your sympathy, my labour would be in vain. What would be my hope ‘that I could spend, and be spent for you’? I should have none. Vain and futile would be my efforts—useless and dead my acts.

“And you without me? As a ship without its rudder, as the blind leading the blind, as the man whose hope is not in his God, as ‘the fool that saith in his heart, there is no God.’ Such would ye be.

“Then let us pray heartily, earnestly together, that we may never forget this compact entered upon to-day—that I may not ‘be wearied’ or faint-hearted in doing my duty; and that you may say, ‘How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!’”

Here Mr. Leslie’s voice changed from its earnest, simple-speaking tone to one of solemn melody; and as he said the words, distinct and clear, “Now to God the

Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," the whole congregation, moved and awe-stricken, sunk upon their knees, and, as he finished, with one voice said, "Amen!"

Lord Bernard rose from his prayer of thanksgiving with those serene feelings of pious joy that none but the good experience, and he looked into his wife's face to see the reflection of his emotions. Her eyes glistened with the unshed tears of gratified happiness, and, in the interchange of looks, they read better than words could express their mutual pleasure.

As they were mutely conversing, he did not note a young and graceful girl coming down the aisle, simply robed in white. Just as he had half opened the pew-door, she appeared before him; and as he shut it again, to enable her to pass, she bent her head in acknowledgment of his courtesy. Save his own wife, it was rare to see in that large but roughly-built

church, any other among the congregation than those for whom it was so plainly constructed—being originally built more to hold the many than please the few. Therefore, for the moment, Lord Bernard was surprised at the fair young vision ; still more so at the quiet dignity of her manner, the simple grace that so much enhanced her beauty, as she passed on her way before him.

“My dear Kate, did you see that fair girl?” exclaimed Lord Bernard, as they left the church-door. “Can she be Mrs. Leslie?”

“I do not know, indeed, Henry ; but the sermon ! Was ever one heard more appropriate, or more touching ? Do you think, love, we may call at the parsonage, and thank Mr. Leslie ? I shall be quite uncomfortable until I have told him in some way, either at once openly, or to his wife quietly, the gratification he has given me.”

“We will go, Kate; for I also, by that means, shall have my doubts set at rest, as to whether the young angel robed in white is really the wife of that plain, grave young man.”

“Do not call him plain, Henry, after such a sermon. As long as he speaks so much to the heart as he did to-day, I shall think of him, as he enjoined us to do, in his last sentence, ‘How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!’”

“True, Kate. Therefore, little boys, go home with Turner; mamma and I mean to walk a little further, and call at the parsonage.”

On their way thither they stopped and spoke to various persons; and it gave them great pleasure to find, from Mr. Robarts down to the little lame cinder-boy, who had come to church for the first time since he had met his sad accident—all

were unanimous in their praise of the new clergyman.

“If he knocked at everybody’s heart as he did at mine,” said good Dr. Dawson, “we shall have a change for the better amongst us.”

“You are right, doctor,” said my lord; “he has given us all something to do. Though his manner is simple, and his words also, there was a truth and force in both, that, as you say, spoke to us individually—even you, my little man. How is the wound getting on?”

“The fire is pretty well out of it now, my lord,” said the lame boy; “and the doctor gave me leave to come to church to-day, as a treat—and please, my lord, I’ll never forget it.”

“Good boy,” said Lady Bernard; “but now, don’t do too much. Tell your mother not to let you go to work until you have had plenty of strong broth from the Castle.”

"The doctor will trim mother sore if she sends me off too soon," answered the boy, smiling.

"Tut, tut," said the doctor—"I spoil ye, and that's a fact."

Lord and Lady Bernard were ushered into the renovated drawing-room, where Emily was found on her knees before a great arm-chair, within which was baby enthroned in state. The white chip hat was on the floor, the little white tippet by it, and the pretty mamma was busily employed making love to baby, after her long absence at church; who gravely, but serenely, cooed back her pleasure, stroking the peach-like cheek of her mother with her own rosy, fat hand.

That bloom deepened in colour as Emily rose—hastily, it is true, but gracefully. It was not from confusion that the blush arose, but apparently from pleasure; for the blue eyes sparkled, and both hands were held out, as she said, with irresistible gladness—



“Ah! how kind, how good! I have so much for which to thank you—I wished so much to see you, that I might tell you so,” and she frankly placed a hand in each one of theirs.

“Then you are Mrs. Leslie?” burst involuntarily from Lord Bernard’s lips.

“Oh, yes,” she answered, smiling; “and this is Miss Leslie.”

His gaze was so full of admiration, that, a little confused, Emily made use of baby to divert his thoughts from anything so insignificant as herself.

Lady Bernard understood her innocent little stratagem, and, accordingly, admired Miss Leslie very much. “But,” she continued, “we have intruded upon you, principally, my dear Mrs. Leslie, to express our delight at Mr. Leslie’s sermon.”

A brilliant flush tinged Emily’s fair face, brow, and neck; but she said only—

“I am so glad!”

“I assure you,” said Lord Bernard, “I never heard a sermon more suited to the place and people; and if he stirred the heart within me to do my duty, I feel sure such an appeal was not lost on the rest of the congregation.”

Emily listened with speaking eyes and glowing cheeks; but it was not the way of the Leslies to arrogate anything to themselves, so she modestly bent her head by way of thanks, and said—

“I hear Mr. Leslie’s step in the hall—allow me to call him.”

The Bernards were so fascinated by their new clergyman and his wife, that nobody knows when they would have thought of taking leave. But Anne—part housemaid, part butler—put her head in at the door, in the usual sort of bashful way female servants perform such duties, and said—

“Dinner is served, mem.”

Now, Anne was a peculiar woman in her

way. An order given was as good as done on her part; therefore, "missus" having ordered dinner at two o'clock of the day, dinner was to be at two of the clock; and all the lords and ladies in the land, kings and queens into the bargain, would not have driven Anne from her purpose—always excepting "missus" changing her own mind, and giving Anne a fresh order.

Now, Emily was for once a little vexed: she was so charmed with her guests, and had not half expressed to them her thanks and gratitude—and now they would leave rather than interfere with the dinner-hour.

"How could you, Anne, announce dinner when we had visitors?"

"If you please, 'm," said Anne, "you ordered dinner to be at two o'clock."

"But you should think another time, and remember that it is rude to do such a thing. It is as if one wished to turn our visitors away."

"Then you won't have meals, 'm, when folks is calling?"

"Come, come, Anne—settle that another time. I am very hungry: we will take our chance of the next visitors," said Mr. Leslie.

"Dear Henry, do you think she is vain, silly, and flaunting?" were the first words of Lady Bernard as they quitted the parsonage.

"And you, Kate—do you think her a bustling homely housewife?" retorted Lord Bernard.

"Come, we are matched, Henry, in our prognostications regarding Mrs. Leslie; we owe each other nothing. But, apart from the gratification I feel at her proving so very different to what we feared, did you ever see a fairer, more graceful creature?"

"Never!—though I say so to the wife of my bosom. But what pleases me most is that with all her beauty and high breeding (for you can see, Kate, at a glance, that she

has been brought up in the first society) she is so natural and simple; and that proceeds from no want of sense; for, on the contrary, her countenance beams with intelligence, and her remarks are replete with discrimination, as if she had really read and thought. She will be no fine lady, too delicate in mind and person to assist her husband. On my life! high as my opinion of Mr. Leslie was before, I think twice as well of him now I have seen his wife."

"Her manners are most graceful—so refined; and what lovely hands she has!"

"Ha! My dear wife, what two fine specimens we are of the weakness of the human mind. We ought to be thinking of Mr. Leslie and his sermon, so apostolic and faithful; and, instead, we are lost in admiration of the beauty and grace of his wife. On one subject, however, I have made up my mind: I shall take you from home shortly, for change of air and scene, and we will leave

Mr. and Mrs. Leslie to themselves for a few months. Thus they will be left to make their own way, fight their own battles, without our assistance; and if they succeed in establishing themselves in the hearts of our people, their throne therein will be all the more secure that they have done it themselves, without help from us."

"A wise plan, Henry. As for me, I shall leave home for the first time with a dawn of hope in my heart that we shall not return to find matters worse than when we left. But, before we go, Henry, we must ask the Leslies to dinner, and introduce them, through the medium of one or two entertainments, to their neighbours. We may as well leave our people in the possession of the fact that we are disposed to love and respect our clergyman and his wife to the utmost extent—and we can do it, in this way, before we leave."

"I respond to your idea, Kate, and think the softening powers of a quiet,

consistent Christian — such as I am sure Mr. Leslie is—with the more bewitching, and so no less potent, influence that Mrs. Leslie may exercise over them, will be very good for the uncouth ways and somewhat rough manners of many of our good neighbours. Fix Thursday next for the first dinner-party, that Mrs. Robarts may have time to concoct a new dress for the occasion.

“Ah! Henry, you are satirical.”

“Nay, good wife, rather amiable in forethought. Mrs. Robarts has hitherto reigned supreme in beauty; now she must adorn her best, otherwise our modest rector’s wife will outshine her in white muslin.”



## CHAPTER VII.

“Every man in this age has not a soul  
Of crystal for all men to read their actions through;  
Men’s hearts and faces are so far asunder,  
That they hold no intelligence.”

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

MR. AND MRS. LESLIE had many visitors; and together they returned the courtesy, becoming acquainted with numbers of their parishioners, both rich and poor.

Mrs. Robarts had naturally a kind heart, and could bear without envy or anger the knowledge that a younger, fairer rival was about to shine in what had hitherto been her own hemisphere. Perhaps if Mrs. Leslie had had four pretty, little, healthy, rosy

daughters, she would not have been so complaisant. On the contrary, she would have considered it only a duty to dislike or ignore her as soon as possible. But the baby Adeline would enter into no competition with the Miss Robarts'—her round rosy face and chubby baby beauty being in marked contrast to their little fragile frames and delicate features. Therefore Mrs. Robarts felt nothing need prevent Mrs. Leslie becoming that bosom friend, that charming companion, she had so long been requiring; while Emily, on her part, met her advances a great deal more than half way; admired the devotion and incessant care that Mrs. Robarts bestowed upon her delicate girls, all the more because she did not think she could do the same. Pitied her to her heart's content for the many drawbacks and troubles with which Mrs. Robarts said her daily path was beset; entered with all her enthusiastic

nature into Mrs. Robarts's, hopes, wishes, and plans for the future, just as if the well-doing of the Miss Robarts was of so much more import than all the little Adelines that ever were born.

Not that Emily was at all deficient in maternal affection, or thought slightly of Adeline's charms; but she was so little in the habit of bringing forward her own belongings or wishes, unless forced to do it, that she had room in her heart for any amount of sympathy claimed from her.

And Mrs. Robarts, on the first sounding of the deep well of love dwelling in that unselfish nature, set to work to turn as much of it as she could to her own account.

She was old enough to remember the strict, severe, almost cruel manner in which children were taught in the days of good Queen Charlotte to reverence their parents. She had heard her mother

describe the many hours she had been doomed to stand, exhausted and faint, in the presence of *her* mother; for children in their day were not allowed to sit without a permission from their parents, and that was rarely given; she had seen and experienced some of the evils that arise from the estrangement between parent and child—which estrangement must take place where the parent is the severe judge, the exacting taskmaster, the relentless punisher, instead of the fond mother, the kind adviser, the dearest, truest friend. And in endeavouring to avoid the one evil, Mrs. Robarts, like many people before her, had fallen into the contrary extreme, setting up as idols to be worshipped the little weak mortals whose wayward steps she was to guide aright, and not lead further astray by ill-judged spoiling and indulgence.

But at all events, by the time the

Thursday arrived which was to see the first entertainment given by Lord and Lady Bernard in honour of the Leslies, Mrs. Robarts and our Emily were fast friends, and on most excellent terms : which indeed was much the case with all whom they were likely to meet at dinner. According to their usual custom, John and Emily set out on their walk up to the Castle in such good time that half way up they met the carriage coming down for them. The coachman very civilly expressed his regret that he had not been in time to prevent Mrs. Leslie walking (though it was clearly no fault of his, but Mr. Leslie's aptitude to take time by the forelock), and offered to take them up there and then ; but Emily hazarded the remark that perhaps he was going for others as well as herself—which, proving to be the case, they entreated him to go on.

He was a coachman after Emily's own heart, for he said, as he left them—

“I can now bring up good Mrs. Dawson, ma'am, as well as Mrs. Robarts and Miss Charles.”

“John! what a nice coachman.”

“Very, dear; but good masters make good servants,” answered John.

What with taking their time (for Emily's sake), and admiring the strange views of the fiery works, and the blue hills, and the Castle itself, the Leslies, through no particular effort on their parts, did not arrive much sooner than the carriage—so that all the ladies met together in the great hall. Emily had removed her bonnet, smoothed her hair, changed her shoes, put on the long lace gloves then in use, and declared herself quite ready to enter the drawing-room, ere Mrs. Robarts had half done arranging her dress and her lace tippet. Mrs.

Dawson pinned and unpinned Miss Charles's turban, the tassel of which, meant to hang elegantly on one side, had, through some derangement in the carriage, taken an uncomfortable position over her nose. Miss Charles inveighed bitterly against Betty, whose fault she declared it must be that this most elegant of turbans had become thus damaged; while good Mrs. Dawson excused Betty, on the score of her many avocations as cook, housemaid, ladies'-maid, butler, and boots, while she pinned up the offending tassel. Meanwhile Emily helped Mrs. Robarts, and at last, beneath the patient eyes of Mr. Leslie, the upper and under-butler and three footmen, the two anxious ladies considered themselves ready.

John drew his Emily's fair arm within his, mentally congratulating himself that the bloom on her cheeks rivalled the bright colour of Mrs. Robarts's dress, while the



simplicity and elegance of her appearance put to shame all the studied graces of the other ladies.

“ My Emily has no need of dress or ornament, I thank Heaven,” said he to himself, as he saw her welcomed so cordially by Lord and Lady Bernard, and watched her graceful obeisance, and her smiling pleasure as she sat down by Lady Bernard; the simplicity of her white-sprigged muslin adding to, rather than taking away from, her appearance. And she was deep in the history of a poor family over the hills, long before Mrs. Robarts’s stiff brocade had settled itself into a chair, or rather at the edge. For Mrs. Robarts, though unquestionably the possessor of the handsomest dress in the room, had not yet learnt that a true lady was known more by her quiet, gentle manners than her dress.

Lord Bernard took a seat by her, but

she was not in a fit state to attend to him. She was still in a flurry, looked heated and fussy, while the rich silk rustled at every movement, making it impossible to keep up a connected conversation.

Miss Charles was on the other side, but as he had a devout horror of her peculiar method of speaking, he was not sorry that dinner was opportunely announced; and, as was his custom always, he gave the place of honour to the clergyman's wife, taking in Mrs. Leslie to dinner.

There were at dinner a certain number of clerks, under-clerks, and deputy-clerks, all of whom had been in the habit of staring at Mrs. Robarts when they met together at these periodical dinners. But now Mrs. Robarts goodnaturedly waived her claim to being the prettiest woman in the room, and they transferred this mute homage to Mrs. Leslie.

But it was thrown away upon her utterly.

She was chatting to Lord Bernard, so earnestly and delightedly, that the knife and fork she used were more alive to the admiration she was exciting than herself, for they now and then reflected back the beaming eyes. It was not often people conversed in such familiar style to Lord Bernard, but he thought it the sweetest way in the world; she was discovering to him such boundless kindness of heart, such depths of charity and love, such pure simplicity and unselfishness, all so unconsciously, exactly as if he thought just as she thought, that he said to himself, "Is this an angel stolen in on our company unawares, to teach us and tell us what we shall meet in Heaven?"

After dinner Lady Bernard devoted herself to general conversation among her lady guests when they retired to the drawing-room. Thus it happened that Miss Charles pounced upon Emily, as a vulture may be supposed to hold grim converse with a snow-white dove.

“Aw me, my honey, what a sweet lamb ye are, nae wonder my lord’s that doighted after ye. But deed ’o goodness, where and iver did Mistress Robarts light o’ that dress? It’s smuggled goods, or my name’s no Elizabeth Charles.”

“I think,” interrupted Emily, “it belonged to her mother——.”

“And whar, may a body ax, has she been a keeping on’t a’ these years? Na, na, tak my word she’s just paid on to the half-guinea a-yard; and sum o’ these days Robarts will rise up a ruined man, wi’ her golden gowns, and French misses, and sich like awfu’ ways. Betty Oliver, that’s my maid, as opened the door till ye, the day ye called, my pratty lamb—Betty Oliver’s just ameezed at their gangings on. And sich a cook as Betty is! I made her mysel, from a lass, and it’s her say, and it’s my say, never no face ever cam intil owre house that we liked better. And

such a preacher! Dearies me, says I to Betty, we mauna miss a word thon fine preacher says. I aye taks all opportunities of giving a bit of preaching to Betty mysel, thinking it nae mair nor my duty, heed o' a family as I be; and if ever a woman will mak' a discernment as to where thon silk cam' fro', it 'ull be Betty, no less. Aye me, what a wonderment she'll be in when I tell her o' the colour, and the richness, and the rustle! It's past me, hoo my lord does na see the hail thing; and if Betty or mysel could but get his ear, my certie but we wad tell him hoo Mr. Robarts——."

"Oh!" said Emily, joyfully, interrupting her and seizing hold of the only clue she had been able to disentangle from these heterogeneous sentences, "Lord Bernard does know. He was only telling me at dinner what a valuable person Mr. Robarts was, and how ill he should be able to do without him."

“Aw,” said Miss Charles, rather abashed — “Ayes me, weel, he could say nae less to such as you, honey. Says I to Betty, ‘Ye show yer company by yer manners, Betty; and never let me hear you let on of ony scandal nor such like, for I’ll no listen to one word. And sae that’s the doctor’s new assistant. Ayes me, now he has four on ’em, and a thousand a-year; and here’s the grandest preacher as ever I heerd, or Betty either, has but three hundred a-year, and nae curate. Aw but its a crying sin, and it will work its way out, like thorns i’ the flesh, and I’ll be pleased to see it.”

“Ah!” said Emily, taking advantage of a pause in Miss Charles’s speech, a pause rendered necessary from sheer want of breath, “what a charming person is the doctor! But can you tell me, Miss Charles, anything about the pictures in this room? Some appear to be family portraits, while

others are evidently ancient and of value, I should say."

It was so seldom that Miss Charles was appealed to upon any matter — those who knew her well avoiding her, and those who did not having little inclination to do so — that she felt at once flattered and pleased. Being a shrewd woman, she saw at once that Mrs. Leslie neither despised nor laughed at her, and would be grateful for the information she could give. 'Tis true, Miss Charles had an unlovely mind, warped by temper and malevolence into something sufficiently evil to be avoided by every one; yet she was not insensible to the idea that it must be pleasant to be something to some one besides a Betty. Therefore, she exerted herself to the utmost to entertain Mrs. Leslie; and if, in the various historiettes attached to each picture, the bias of her mind led her, now and then, to throw a bespattering of muddy innuendo upon what she related, the simple-minded



Mrs. Leslie bore her safely through the danger, landing her invariably upon a more charitable and amiable shore.

In those days—upwards of fifty years ago—people educated themselves a great deal more than they do at present. There was so much less to occupy the mind, the time, or the brains, that dull, inert people remained dull and inert. They were never startled out of the monotony of their lives to rush for a train; they never suddenly set out on a journey from London to Edinburgh upon a day's notice. They plodded through the "Spectator," "Sir Charles Grandison," and the "Pilgrim's Progress" duly once a-year—never dreaming of the amount of literature that was to be daily offered up at the feet of their grandchildren. But those who, shadowing forth the leaps that the world was about to make, had no notion of being left behind because of being born a few years too soon, were carried on by the exercise of their com-

mon sense, and made up in shrewdness what they wanted in education.

This was the case with Miss Charles. Her great error was that she chose a muddy path to walk in, very few caring to follow her; and the loneliness of her condition made her find the more amusement the more difficult her way. It remains to be seen how Mr. Leslie fulfilled the promise made in his first sermon to this parishioner in particular. It would appear from her remarks to her confidante Betty, as she disrobed for the night after the dinner-party, that Miss Charles was not ill-pleased with it altogether.

Yet no sore had she smitten, no wound had she opened, no character had she smudged: Betty had to listen to a quiet detail of the dishes, an especial description of Mrs. Robarts' dress; and so few disparaging remarks, that the maid, accustomed to highly-seasoned discourses, was somewhat disappointed. She had her confidante also, and a dinner at the

Castle was prolific of much gossip, that, emanating from Miss Charles as primary source, ramified off into many streams.

But Miss Charles slept pleasantly, and rose cheerily. With regard to the rest of the party, Lord and Lady Bernard were pleased to observe that their new clergyman was rising in the estimation of his parishioners as much as they could desire ; while it entered into the heart of no one to cavil at, or do otherwise than admire, his blooming and unsophisticated wife.

“ We may now leave home with comfort, my dear lord,” said Lady Bernard to her husband.

“ We will begin our arrangements tomorrow,” responded he. “ But, pardon me, wife—I am faithless to you ; I have lost my heart to the fair Emily.”

“ I can willingly pardon you. I am as deeply smitten by her husband.”

Having thus nothing to forgive each other, they calmly fell asleep.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ Down the hill-side tripping brightly,  
O'er the pebbles tinkling lightly,  
Mid the meadows rippling, merrily the mountain-current  
goes ;  
By the broken rocks careering,  
Through the desert persevering,  
Flowing onward ever, ever singing as it flows.

“ But oh ! the darksome caves,  
That swallow up the waves !  
Oh ! the shadow-haunted forest, the sandy shallows wide ;  
Oh ! the hollow-reeded fen,  
Like the stagnant minds of men,  
A desert for the silver foot of mountain-cradled tide.”

ERNEST JONES.

THE Bernards are gone, and the Leslies  
are left to encounter a probation more  
difficult than any. For human nature is

so strange! If it runs blindfold for a time in one path, 'tis very apt to retrace its steps, and pursue the contrary course with equal heedlessness.

Thus the Leslies, having become so instantaneously popular, it was but probable there would be a reaction, and those who praised them most would be more vehement in censure. But it did not appear that they would be affected by either extreme; they had their duties to perform, and, whether welcomed coldly or warmly, Mr. Leslie pursued his way undaunted, while Mrs. Leslie saw and heard nothing but what her own sweet spirit suggested.

About three miles over the wild, heathy, and fern-clad hills was a little hamlet.

Snugly reposing within the shadow of the far-famed Dinas Rock, it yet had spread out before it the whole beauty of the Neath Valley, stretching far away,

even to the sheeny light of the Bristol Channel.

Here and there the voluminous thick smoke of iron-works cast a sable cloud over scenes that nature had visibly intended should be masterpieces of beauty, causing the thoughtful gazer to think of those besetting sins which blacken the fair souls sent pure from the hands of their Maker.

The bare hills, scarred with crags, as if some mighty convulsion of Nature had heaped up the stones of the plain into chaotic masses; the verdure of the valleys, the mass of woods, and the running stream, were not out of unison with each other. On the contrary, they enhanced their separate beauty. But the touch of man blurred it all, blasting the trees, destroying the pasturage, and bringing out, bare and naked, the stony hills.

Within hearing distance of the white-

washed cottages of the hamlet ran the noisy, restless river Hepstè, whose course from its very birth was so impeded by various obstacles, that a less impetuous stream would have turned and sought a more peaceful way. Unlike most rivers—Great Father Thames, for instance—rising silent, insignificant, and small, meandering at first through marshy meadows, and seeking companions in sluggish drains and low reedy pools, the Hepstè started out at once into life—a busy, bustling, opiniated rill.

Just as some human soul rises out of birth, poverty, and isolation, working out, with indomitable perseverance, a name, a home, a household; while a less ardent spirit seeks to linger in its primeval obscurity, and becomes merged at last in the great River of Life, lost and forgotten.

Not so the Hepstè. It sprang into the



world with a determined spirit ; it leapt and danced at its very birth over stones and rocks, so large and numerous that imagination alone could at times trace a feathery dash of spray on the mossy stone bed ; nevertheless, it grew into a considerable body of water whenever a smooth path was vouchsafed it. But even then it permitted itself no rest, but the rather hurried on with quicker speed, as if conscious these moments of rest were dangerous to one who had an extraordinary path to work out, and many difficulties to overcome.

At last, upon a sudden, swollen now to a considerable size by many admiring followers, it came upon a high elevated point, bristling with lichen-covered rocks and moss-grown stones, stretching far and wide like a stubborn fortification. Here, there, everywhere, the little brook ran peering in and out, tumbling in its heedless passage down

many a steep rock, until it paused breathless in a large round pool. Foolish brook, there is no escape, down you must go still further; yes, collect all your strength and energy, there is nothing before you but a mass of falling crags, and the fates alone know if you will ever reach the bottom in safety. 'Twas a gallant little brook—it waited but a few moments to collect itself into a respectable body of water, when out it dashed again, splashing, rushing, leaping, springing, boiling, and bubbling, until, fairly driven into a foaming state of vigorous determination, it arrived at the bottom, and ran rejoicing along at its own exploits.

Gurgle not so loudly, merry brook—see what is now before you. High rose in front a beetling crag. “Is it twenty feet?—thirty feet? Ha, I can leap that,” sung the brook. “Not so, you vain little river, it is three hundred feet high, and

what can you do now, you little proud thing?"

It sobbed, and boiled, and bubbled a moment—it was of no avail.

"Return, retrace my path!" gurgled the little proud thing; "never! is not water the first power on earth? Will not one drop destroy a life?—a few gallons move a mountain? I will not go back. If I cannot climb up into that sky I will go under the mountain. I will force my way through, let iron or stone stand in the path."

So she set herself resolutely to work—she pushed her way into a thousand dark holes and gullies—she shuddered as she felt the cold clasp of vapour that knew no sun—had never even heard of it. She grew silent and quiet as she felt the deep unknown darkness of a place that had never seen the light, fall upon her fresh little spirit.

Suddenly she found herself expanding within a large cool place, in which she knew a thousand beautiful things might have been reflected on her pellucid bosom, but that it was dark. A pitchy coal blackness, that made itself felt, and which rendered her more sad and silent than ever. She thought, "This is about to be my grave; heedless and silly, I have wandered into this vast unknown depth, which I can never fill up, and thus I shall be lost for ever in the bowels of the earth. And I so happy, so merry, loving the cheerful sun, and rejoicing in the gay sights of the fields, the blue skies, the fair flowers, the blossoming trees—alas! alas! I shall pour myself away into the vast abysses of earth, and never more be seen or heard of in the happy lovely world."

Thus she sighed and bemoaned, low and soft; but suddenly she felt a little ripple on her bosom, and immediately her ardent

spirit rose again within her, and she said, "Where my sister, the wind, comes in, so can I go out." So with thought and discretion she went warily about, conscious in all that darkness that she was still proceeding onwards; until at last a little ray like a star flickered on her course. Encouraged by this, on she dashed. Brighter grew the beam, louder she sang—until at last, with noisy acclamations, she bounded out of the dark mountain into the full-glowing sunshine! How she danced, sang, and rejoiced! How she bubbled, and hummed, and sparkled! How she dashed at everything—the largest stones, the most precipitate path. "I have made my way through the mountain," sang she—"nothing shall stop me now!"

So away she went, larger, bolder, more vehement than ever; down a dozen feet and more, and yet nothing it seemed to her. Now she parted in two—each stream endeavouring to vie with the other in its gay leaps and

noisy clamour; but they met at the bottom, and went lovingly on, until—heavens! a precipitous jump of twenty feet and more!—nothing to break it—no friendly jutting crag, no moss-grown bank, no bending gnarled old trunk. Nay, this is too much—she will be dashed to pieces ere she reach the bottom—she will be lost in vapour as she leaps. But it must be done; for can she, who has made her way through the iron bosom of the mountain, stay or stop for anything?—no, not for worlds! One pause—one full breath—she leaps high—she is over! and, safe at the bottom, runs murmuring on in a bed of quiet pools, shady trees, and deep, wood-clothed ravines.

But what a feat! Between the steep rock and the leaping water you can walk, and yet emerge unsprinkled; for, such is the impetus of the energetic little Hepstè, she leaps clear of the rock by a dozen yards. Not half a mile from this wonderful fall lay

the little hamlet first mentioned; and, as if all its heedlessness was expended in this last leap, the Hepstè floats quietly by, and swells into a calm, smiling river, keeping on its flowing course to the Bristol Channel.

Conspicuous among the houses in the hamlet was one, quaint in its gable roof, bright with its rows of casemented windows, gay with its beds, terraces, rockeries, and rustic baskets of flowers. This was Captain Hill's house; and his two daughters, Margaret and Frances, lived in the essence of flowers.

Miss Hill's fancy dwelt among wild flowers. Here was a rockery, with lichens rare, pretty, or gay; there was another, the curious old limestones peeping out amid feathery ferns, among which all the known species in Britain could be found in high perfection—gathered from all parts with care and trouble. On a grassy bank lay wonderful specimens of the orchis tribe—the bee, the spider, and the fly, protected from the deceived vision of hungry birds by little wire cages.



Here and there towered monstrous specimens of thistles, and in a secluded but sunny nook dwelt that rarest and ugliest of plants, the "ladies' slipper."

Serapias, campanulas, hyacinths, lilies of the valley, star-like primulas in damp moss, modest violets, blue and white periwinkles, ragged robins, herb willows, and various other beauties belonging to the wild tribes of English Flora, made a fair and sweet show against Miss Fanny's roses, carnations, stocks, and gillyflowers.

Thus, it happened at no season of the year did this garden present a dull appearance; and yet its gaiety was not its chief attraction. Far and near came the curious botanist, to see the living specimens of some rare plant, in search of which he had spent years. If it was not in flower, he could see it faithfully portrayed, unmistakable in its character and appearance, by the skilful paint-brush of Miss Hill, who never saw a wild-flower that she

did not thus perpetuate it ; while Miss Fanny, not to be outdone by her sister, would hang the walls of their house with gorgeous pictures of her favourite flowers, or transfer them, in almost natural beauty and ease, to some fabric by the skill of her needle.

Thus, in this house, so gay and attractive outside, dwelt spirits congenial, and none ever entered it without feeling the better for so doing.

The fine old soldier sanctified a certain space around him by a spirit so good and gracious, nothing evil could enter the boundary.

The intelligent, excellent, charming Miss Hill diffused such an air of refined talent and energy around her, that nought either silly or ignorant could exist near her ; while the lively, loving Miss Fanny brightened everything with her sunny spirits and warm heart.

Thus none can wonder if between the

Leslies and Hills there sprung up a friendship that is now drawing to a close on earth, only to bloom more freely in the Heaven promised to such beings. The Miss Hills had been perfectly ready to proffer all the affection they had to bestow upon a neighbour such as their father described Mrs. Leslie to be. Nor were they less alive to the benefit a single-minded and earnest pastor would prove to the district in which they dwelt. Driven from one sect to another—from extempore preachers to ranting Methodists—from Beulah Tabernacles to Sion Conventicles, the Welsh clergymen of the Church of England, being but little higher in their grade than their unlicensed rivals, it was not without reason that the more respectable portion of society saw little religion of any kind among the great body of the people. Yet were they fully capable of respecting a well-educated

man from one of the English Universities. The very name of either of them bore a certain prestige with it that carried them through a great deal that was personally disagreeable to their parishioners. Such had been the fate of Mr. Willis. Because he came among them with his academic honours, carried even into the pulpit, they bore with his supineness, his selfishness, his dandyism, and deserted their favourite chapels of worship to hear the doctrine preached by lips that had been commended at Oxford, or to gaze on the red scarf, fringed with ermine, that marked his title to learning. None are such true judges of the inherent character of lady or gentleman as the lower orders; and even after Mr. Willis's character had been mooted and decided upon, the gentle fine-ladyism of his wife bore him on for some while on the full tide of popularity. In those days, even among

this lawless set, there was a great charm, a silent delight, in the refinements of the upper classes ; and it is for this reason that we have dwelt, somewhat too forcibly, on the personal attractions of Mrs. Leslie, and the confiding, brotherly manner of her husband. These paved the way to a certain amount of liking at first sight. That the grave, quiet young man in spectacles was able to claim even higher honours for learning than the elegant Mr. Willis pleased them. He was modest as well as clever, demanding their respect as much as their admiration ; while his blooming wife was as refined in all her ways and thoughts as the Lady Bernard herself—yet entered into the griefs and troubles of her poorest neighbour with a warmth that made all hearts open to greet her. The population was very different from even a town, much less a country parish. Every nation under heaven ap-

peared to contribute a share. And the very work in which they were engaged—bending the hardest ores of the earth to a pliancy and submission more befitting the reed that yields to a sigh of wind—gave them an independence of action, a rude grandeur of thought, and a self-confidence that nothing could lower. Six months passed away. Many a rough, uncouth miner became softened as he thought he had a kind friend at the parsonage. Many an unwomanly woman knew she could gain both help and advice from the gentle, pitying lady that dwelt there.

## CHAPTER IX.

“A life has just begun !  
A life has just begun !  
Another soul has won  
The glorious spark of being !  
Pilgrim of life, all hail !  
He who at first called forth  
From nothingness the earth,  
Who piled the mighty hills and dug the sea,  
Who gave the stars to gem  
Night like a diadem,  
Thou little child, made thee !  
Young creature of the earth,  
Fair as its flowers, though brought in sorrow forth,  
Hail, all hail !”—ANON.

JOHN, accustomed to leave all domestic matters to his Emily, and, apparently, solely occupied by the duties of his parish, the perusal of some well-beloved books, and



a slight attention to the liabilities of a father, was yet alive to a certain impending domestic event—that, while it gave a languor to the steps of his wife, brought a very lively glow to his own heart. John had a weakness. He longed for a son. The very delight he himself took in his favourite books made him think with ecstasy of teaching a son the languages necessary to enjoy the same pleasure. Many a time, in sheer delight at their majesty, had he rolled out, in sonorous voice, the words of Homer, the grandiloquent sentences of the heroes of Euripides, and looked at Adeline to mark the effect.

Poor baby Adeline ! She winked and blinked, or roundly opened her blue eyes in astonishment at papa, but clearly her highest happiness lay in a pocket-handkerchief rolled up and knotted into a peculiar fashion to represent a flying baby, which might have passed current in those dark

ages for a doll, but now, in these times, would be scorned by an intelligent young lady of sixteen months' experience of the world.

A sort of presentiment possessed the good John, that because he had set his heart upon this little one thing, he was not to think he obtained other than his righteous deserts if the Almighty vouchsafed him only daughters. Two daughters! Soon he might have two daughters. What could he do with them?—what would be their fate? They could not hope to be as pretty as their mother—here the sight of Adeline's cradle met his eye, and the remembrance of her baby prettinesses rebuked him. Anon came the thought—wherefore was the cradle there? A shock smote him. His Emily had not met him, as was her wont, on his return from his parochial wanderings. He would ring. No, he would go and seek her. At the very

threshold of the study-door he was met by Wilson, the Roman-nosed damsel once mentioned before.

“Missus’s love, and begged master would not be uneasy, but take his tea and prepare his sermon for next Sunday. She was keeping up pretty well, and Mrs. Dawson and the doctor were with her.”

“But—but,” murmured Mr. Leslie, “can I not see her for a few moments?”

“Better not, sir. Missus will only be fashed. Take your tea, like a good sir, and keep up your spirits. And please to have an eye on missy—poor little dear! I took the liberty of putting her here, sir, to be out of the way.”

There are times when women will have all their own way, and take every advantage. Mr. Leslie turned back into his study with meek submission. He obediently took the tea placed before him, and he equally obeyed the order about

preparing his sermon. That is, he opened his blotting-book, placed the paper, examined his pen, even dipped it into the ink. But there his submission ended. His eyes wandered from the fire to the sofa where, lately, Emily had been wont to recline every evening—and then they rested on Adeline's cradle.

“Poor, little Adeline! you are about to be deposed. Perhaps your dear mamma may be so kind as to give me a son, and you a brother. Yet still, little Adeline, I think you will agree with me, there is a questionable pleasure in this business. ‘Am I not better to thee than ten sons?’ doth a shadowy form on the sofa say to me; and truly, I say back in return—‘Ay! better than life itself.’ Beneficent Father of all, spare me the life with which Thou has blest mine so exceedingly. Spare my Emily, and pardon my wild wishes!”

Taking in his trembling hand a little

miniature, painted but lately, of his wife, Mr. Leslie, unable to fix his attention upon anything else, thus mused over it; and, as his thoughts grew, he seized the paper intended for a very different subject, and wrote as follows:—

“Painter! I tax your genius, art, and grace,  
To limn that open, smiling, lovely face,  
In which a soft expression strives with sense,  
And buoyant spirit with benevolence.  
In hanging clusters paint her rich brown hair,  
The skin’s transparent pureness, clear and fair;  
The full-turned beauty of that blushing cheek—  
A mouth that seems in sweetest smiles to speak—  
A nose well formed—a quick and laughing glance  
Of eye, to animate the countenance.  
Enough! Here is that look which pleaseth me  
More than all sights of earth, or air, or sea.  
And let no fold, no ornament bedeck  
The stately shapeliness of that smooth neck.  
The robe your choice—its texture and its hue—  
But modest it must needs be, or not true.  
For dress I care not—splendid let it be,  
Or simple—but paint Nature’s charms for me:  
Those delicate and just proportions trace,  
Which give to every motion nameless grace;  
Then throw o’er all—if skill can go so far—  
The joyous character, the charming air—”

What further Mr. Leslie was going to write no one knows to this day; for the door sud-

denly burst open, and Wilson, her nasal feature more strongly developed than usual, through much apparent friction, rushed in, exclaiming, "A boy, sir! a beautiful boy!—and missus so well!"

"Thank God! Oh! I thank Thee, my God!" For a few seconds, Mr. Leslie's heart was absorbed in thanksgiving, during which Wilson wiped her eyes, blew her nose, settled her cap, and untied and tied her apron-strings. Master was always generous to the bearer of good tidings. Becoming alive to these manœuvres, Mr. Leslie rose, and with nervous hand extracted his purse, which in those days was nothing but a little bag made of soft mouse-coloured leather, run through with a silken cord. The tears gathering to his eyes obscured John's vision, and the tremulous fingers drew the cord into a knot; but, at last, half-a-guinea was extracted, and placed in the Roman-nosed damsel's ready hand.

"When can I see—when may I come to

my dear wife?" pleaded Mr. Leslie, in tones that fully acknowledged Wilson's entire supremacy.

Condescendingly gracious, she replied—

"As soon as hever it is possible, sir—rely upon me."

During the next half-hour John paced his little apartment, by turns elated and grateful.

"Dear little Adeline—softly sleeping, so unconscious—do you know you have a brother, a very beautiful brother, who, some of these days, will read with me Cicero's *De Senectute*, the *Ædipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, the Contention of Ajax and Ulysses in the 13th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; to say nothing of Plato's *Phædo*, Virgil, and Cicero's *Tusculan Questions*? Oh, God! I return Thee humble and hearty thanks for the safe deliverance of my wife. Bless my son! Grant him to be Thy child, as well as the child of earthly parents! May he walk in thy ways, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here John broke



out into Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew, neither of which being known to the writer of this history, the readers will be spared the endeavour to construe it. Probably it was nothing more than a rhapsody as above.

Meantime, the half hour passed : his expected summons came. Making incredible exertions to walk as softly as possible, yet his shoes creaking loudly the more he exerted himself, John mounted the staircase, all unconscious that the well-known sound of his approach was music to his Emily's ears. So bright was her face with happiness, that really it was not unreasonable the suspicion that it was all a mistake—no boy was born.

“ Dear John, I told you it would be a boy—and he is such a fine fellow ! Here he is ! ”

“ Hush, darling—hush, my beloved ! Of course you are always right. Thanks, my Emily ; and thanks to our Almighty Father for this wonderful blessing ! ”

As John stooped, just to touch his wife's

cheek with a husband's softest, holiest kiss, she withdrew the bed-clothes, and discovered a little rosy, cosy morsel of humanity snugly laid by her side, his little face shining all the more ruddy contrasted with his mother's, now paling again after her flush of pleasure.

"It appears to me," said John, with a slight shade of anxiety, "very like what Adeline was."

Perhaps John anticipated an incipient approach to hirsute honours in his son.

"Oh, John," said Emily, with just a fraction of reproach, "and he has very dark eyes, that will be like yours."

"Has he, love? Good, dear boy."

"Now, sir, don't you be a-staying here, and a-tiring of missus. Go to bed, like a good sir."

And obediently submissive as before, John just bent to kiss his Emily once more. At the moment he did so, a carriage swept through the lodge up to the Castle, which

contained Lord and Lady Bernard, and their children, who were returning home, after their long absence abroad.

## CHAPTER X.

“ Be kind to each other,  
The night’s coming on,  
When friend and when brother  
Perchance may be gone!  
Then ’midst our dejection  
How sweet to have earned  
The blest recollection  
Of kindness returned !”

CHARLES SWAIN.

MR. ROBARTS presented himself the first thing in the morning to pay his respects to my lord.

*My Lord.*—“ Ah ! Robarts, I am heartily glad to see you again. All going on well ? ”

*Mr. Robarts.*—“ As well as it is possible

to expect, my lord; but pray allow me first to express my congratulations on the safe return of yourself and my lady. I may truly say, 'tis not the same place when you are away."

*My Lord.*—"I should hope not, my good fellow, or what would be the use of my presence to keep you all in order?"

*Mr. Robarts.*—" 'Tis a pleasant mode of being ordered; but I trust you have all had your healths—the young gentlemen——"

*My Lord.*—"Never better, Robarts. We have enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, and have returned with renewed vigour and hope to do our duty. Mr. Leslie, how goes he on? Does he still answer the expectations we formed on his first appearance?"

*Mr. Robarts.*—"To the full, and more, my lord. Time indeed appears to bring forth fresh claims to our esteem and af-

fection. Your lordship would be delighted to attend the parish meetings now. You remember what they were—noisy clamours, wrangling and contentions. But the manner in which Mr. Leslie conquered them was the great thing—from nothing but sheer patience. They thought to tire him out. Not he. When tired themselves, and suggesting an adjournment, ‘We have done no business,’ says he, ‘yet. If you have any more grievances to settle amongst yourselves, gentlemen,’ he continued, with a quiet smile, ‘pray, go on. I am not required at home until ten o’clock.’ He shamed them, my lord; the most turbulent spirits are now mild as milk. And he has such a fund of straightforward, quiet good sense, they see they cannot turn him or deceive him. They must like him, even against their wishes. And, what has great weight, he has no religious animosity: he is as urbane and for-

bearing with that fretful preacher, Howel, and that canting methodist, Evans, as he would be with you, my lord."

*My Lord.*—"I rejoice to hear this. I had but one fear—that being so young, he might be easily fooled."

*Mr. Robarts.*—"Ah, my lord, if he is, 'tis only in a thorough forgetfulness of himself. There is that well in the parsonage garden, which Mr. Willis had walled up, to prevent the women coming for water—it being an annoyance to him, when he had friends, seeing the troops of dirty women hanging about it. No sooner did Mrs. Leslie hear that the water was so much prized and regretted by them, than she told him, and he came to me to know your wishes. Upon hearing how grieved you had been at its enclosure, and the efforts you had made to carry pipes over the Cinder Tip, in two hours the wall was down, and a pathway opened.



A gate has been put up. At her request I procured Mrs. Leslie two or three good troughs, which, always filling, keeps no woman idling about. By-the-by, did you miss the big bell this morning, my lord? I forbid it being rung, as last night she had a son."

*My Lord.*—"You don't say so? I must tell my lady. But I thought you also, my dear Robarts, were looking out for a similar event. I know Lady Bernard was very assiduous looking for a christening cap of the newest fashion, and I understood it was for a Robarts."

*Mr. Robarts.*—"I am much obliged to her ladyship. It certainly must be as you say, for I had another daughter last Tuesday."

*My Lord.*—"I hope Mrs. Robarts is doing well; but why don't you remonstrate upon her presenting you with nothing but daughters?"

*Mr. Robarts.*—"It is the same to me, my lord; of whatever sex they might be, I should love them all equally. And if I appear not to be so hearty in welcoming them as I ought to be, it is because with every fresh arrival my poor wife's cares and anxieties increase; she is not strong."

*My Lord.*—"Bid her take example from Mrs. Leslie. Her face is sufficiently beaming to drive all care away."

*Mr. Robarts.*—"They are great friends already, my lord—it is impossible to be otherwise with one so sociable as pretty Mrs. Leslie. I hope to live to see my poor Jane take a few lessons from her book of life."

Lady Bernard made it her first business to go personally and inquire after the two ladies.

Mrs. Robarts, whose fifth girl was now five days old, felt capable of receiving company, though low and weak. Accordingly,

Lady Bernard was requested to walk upstairs, where she found the sick lady flushed and nervous. Fearful that her four elder daughters were not being properly looked after, she had them with her in her sick chamber; and though they were tolerably quiet, it is hard to say who was suffering most from this arrangement, their mother or themselves. Blessed are those who show themselves only to do good and kind acts!

“Let me have the charge of your girls until you are stronger,” said Lady Bernard; and, without reference to the trouble — so lately returned home — or the charge, she gave the necessary orders, and was well rewarded by the pleasure and relief instantaneously given to the gratified mother. While these preparations were making, Lady Bernard walked across the Cinder Tip, and proceeded to make inquiries at the parsonage. John met her at the door, but as

for suffering her to depart without a look at his son—the son—it could not be done. Upstairs he bore Lady Bernard, exercising vast ingenuity to avoid the creaking of his shoes, without the least effect.

The son really justified every encomium; he was lying back in his nurse's arms, showing such fine, wide-open eyes, such powers of stretching and yawning, there could not be a doubt about it—he was a first-rate child.

The rustle of Lady Bernard's dress, the intended whispers of John (he was not clever at whispering), were heard in the next room.

“I wish to call him *Æmilius*,” had been John's whisper.

“No, he is to be called John,” was heard from the next room; “dear Lady Bernard, do come and see me.”

And so fair she looked, so happy! Though Lady Bernard only stayed a minute, she

talked of nothing else, the whole evening, but the lovely little mother lying back on her pillow, her sunny curls bursting forth from the little frilled cap, and her hands (certainly Emily had the loveliest hands) clasped like little pearl-shells on the coverlid, as if there was no unoccupied moment in which she was not sending thanks to Heaven.

During some of Lady Bernard's visits to Mrs. Leslie, in her seclusion, the following conversation took place:—

*Lady B.*—“Is it not a little singular that I should have known your sister for two years. We have met often in London, and she always excited my admiration, not only by her beauty, but her great fascination of manner. And yet you are wonderfully unlike.”

*Mrs. Leslie.*—“My sister is like one of those portraits enameled on china. I never saw such purity of complexion united to hair so dark, and eyes so blue.”

*Lady B.*—"I do not mean that in point of personal appearance you are unlike—for your voices, your animation, and little delicate hands and feet, appear family gifts. The difference I perceive is in your life, your likings. How fortunate Mr. Leslie was in selecting you."

*Mrs. Leslie.*—"Yes, because of his profession, our mutual duties. My sister is so clever, so talented, I may say—excelling in music, painting, and many other accomplishments—that one cannot wonder at her delight in the society of those who have the same tastes. She has so charming a memory, she is so animated, that it would be a thousand pities had she to live, like me, in the country."

*Lady B.*—"Ah, yes! how she pitied you. I could not imagine what caused both Lord Bernard and myself to feel so attracted by her voice, until she crossed over to my sofa, and began asking me about you. Then I

recognized the truth, how wonderfully family-likenesses may be traced without the slightest resemblance of feature. As you say, 'tis very rarely one sees such exquisite prettiness as hers—and how Sir Edward dotes on her.”

*Mrs. Leslie.*—“ Yes, we all spoil her ; we cannot help it. She has the prettiest waywardnesses—one must obey them. All her life long no one thwarted her. Did she say she would some day come and see me ? ”

*Lady B.*—“ She means to think about it, I know ; for she asked me various questions concerning the road, and all she would have to encounter—though she shuddered very much, even when I assured her I had undertaken the same journey twice in a year. You have made her some rash promise, have you not, about Adeline ? ”

*Mrs. Leslie.*—“ Oh, do not blame me ; but if ever I have a second daughter, she made John and me promise to let her adopt Adeline.



She has set her heart upon educating a girl; and Sir Edward besought us to consent, it would be the cause of such a vast fund of happiness to my sister. Indeed, I never did, or ever could, refuse her anything for which she asked me."

*Lady B.*—"Well, I hope you will stave off the parting as long as you can; for I fear you will suffer much when called upon to fulfil your promise. Meantime, I must not forget to tell you that I am the bearer of a package for you. Lady Armitage does not seem to have any very exalted opinion of your taste in dress. She says, 'Emily is ignorant whether her dress is of satin or sack-cloth; but she is competent to select flannel petticoats for old women, and will give two where one would do—going without gloves for those fair white arms in consequence. The old women might go without their flannel sooner than I without my gloves.'"

*Mrs. Leslie.*—"How my sister belies her-

self—she is so bountifully generous to those she loves.”

*Lady B.*—“Yes, to you. I think, however, it is fortunate I went with her to select her presents, otherwise our valley would have been turned upside down with the sight of your finery in church: and think what a scandal it would have made, so many allurements of sight coming from the parsonage.”

*Mrs. Leslie.*—“But I always pin and unpin the things my sister sends me, until I transform them into the sober shape suitable to a clergyman’s wife.”

*Lady B.*—“As you are so well to-day, let us unpack the box. I shall wish to know that you are pleased with my share in the selection.”

As dress in those days was supposed to be very different to what it is now, it may not be amiss to describe the contents of the box, taken from the true chronicle that gives all the facts of this family history. To the vota-

ries of fashion of the present day it ought to point out a lesson—namely, that with all the care, all the trouble, all the expense, the fashion of dress is apparently placed on a pivot, which takes sudden turns, and revolves with capricious uncertainty, but still perpetually rotates back to the same point from which it started.

The most expensive article in the box was a silk dress, the colour rather like the gray bloom on the shady side of a pearl. This was laced and ornamented with cords and tassels, and things called tags in those days; while a mantle to match, of the same silk, was looped up at the shoulders with cords and buttons, and ornamental tassels were hung in every direction. To wear with this dress was a hat of shining black chip, lined within by puffings of pink Persian, and plaits of pink ribbon in rows all round. On one side was placed, with a truly jaunty air, a beautiful red moss rose. Here it may be as well to mention that, the

first time Emily wore this dress and hat, she looked both lovely and gay, which caused John, after a certain jocose gravity that he possessed, to go up to her, and, lowly bowing, say, "Madam, will you kindly tell me where I may find my simple wife."

People were easily pleased in those days.

But to go on. There was (then a rare and scarcely known thing) a muff made of moleskin—at least six pairs of gloves, all long ones—some of lace, some of wash leather, and one pair of white kid. Now these gloves were guiltless of being marked inside of some peculiar size, or of being possessed of buttons. They were long useful gloves, covering the arm from the wrist up above the elbow, meeting the short sleeves then generally worn. There were one or two pieces of fine Valenciennes lace. There were two or three lawn handkerchiefs to pin over

the shoulders or over the head, to be tied under the chin. There was a beautiful frock of spotted Indian muslin for the old baby, and a robe trimmed with very rich lace for the new. There were some books for John; a pencil-case, thought very extraordinary, that was just shadowing forth what pencil-cases would arrive at in time (say the present). Some Indian silk pocket-handkerchiefs completed the whole.

Now Emily liked a little finery in her heart: so she was charmed with this box. And every lady who came to see her was not only shown the contents, but allowed to take the patterns.

Consequently, ere she was well enough to shine forth in her new hat herself, even Mr. Leslie could not but remark to his wife a bursting out of finery in his church that was rather surprising—especially in the matter of black hats and pink ornaments.

“ Oh,” said Emily, highly charmed, “ that is all owing to my dear sister. How pleased she would be to hear that her beautiful presents have been so admired and copied. (Now, between you and me, my dear reader, Lady Armitage was more likely to have fainted with indignation.)

## CHAPTER XI.

“ The lover may  
Distrust that look which steals his heart away ;  
The babe may cease to think that it may play  
With heaven’s rainbow ; alchemists may doubt  
The shining gold their crucible gives out ;  
But faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast  
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last.”

MOORE.

BEFORE the winter quite set in, Emily’s mother came to live with them. Partly because she could not exist happily far from Emily (at which, of course, we, reader and narrator, are not surprised), partly because her annual wealth being rather more than theirs, joined to it would make out a very pretty little income for



them all, leading, in the vista of expectation, to the probabilities of keeping a pony, a pony-chaise (all carriages being designated thus), and a worthy boy to take the care of both. Oh! degenerate days of arm-chairs and lolling sofas! Would that some of the young ladies of the present day could have seen Mrs. Reine's back! Flat is much too flat a word to express the swimming step, the regal carriage, the stately throat, the falling shoulders of Mrs. Reine, Emily's mother.

Not the most seducing arm-chair that ever was invented caused her to unbend, and yet with what grace she performed every act.

But certainly she had had her advantages—she had been brought up in a sort of court.

Her father had been Governor of Massachusetts, and his lady wife held receptions somewhat akin to Royal drawing-

rooms, whereat her fine daughters, all strikingly well-looking, bore a very conspicuous part. But as we have only to do with one, Mrs. Reine, we will follow her fortunes.

She married, as did her sisters, early in life, all Englishmen. Though they might have chosen men of much higher rank, among the statesmen round their father's court, the old country had more charms than the new one, and they each married to get back to it. They were women of decided character as well as beauty; and Mrs. Reine in particular, having plighted her troth to a young clergyman travelling for the sake of health, left the loves and affections of a twenty years' life with alacrity, to bestow all upon a youth she had known but six weeks.

However, that sympathy which brings souls together, let seas intervene, proved a true one in her case. She never repented,

or had reason to do so, the choice she made. And while her husband lived, the natural energy of her character had sufficient scope for exercise in devoting herself to his wishes.

But his death, the marriage of both her daughters, left her solitary — for a time stunned. She had never yet experienced what it was to be alone, without a specified duty. She felt intuitively that she should die of doing nothing. About this time various religious persuasions were rising in different parts of the kingdom, and, being a good and pious woman, she decreed within herself to devote her time, like Dorcas of old, to good works. She was rather smitten with the community of the Quakers. They were quiet, passionless, charitable. They were neat, orderly, taciturn. All these things she loved and admired. So she joined them, and became a Quakeress. But human nature is, of all other things,

the most given to capricious freaks. It is often found that what one most admires is what one least can do.

Mrs. Reine was an energetic, stirring character. The "spirit moved" her to be up and doing, far more spiritedly than was deemed correct by the Quakers; so she soon tired of them, and, returning to her "first love," the Church of England, redoubled her ardour in its cause, as some atonement for her apostasy.

Woe to the advocates of dissent! Mrs. Reine entered into a crusade against them, that promised her an ample field for any superabundant activity.

Much as she loved her daughter, she thought, with kindling enthusiasm, of the battle-field her son-in-law's parish would prove to her. So she came armed at all points; though, to outward appearance, a delicate-featured, fair, and gentle specimen of an upright old lady of sixty years

of age, whose symmetry of figure and elastic movements beguiled many walking behind her to wish to behold the face appertaining thereto.

When people adopt a hobby, that hobby obscures the common sense that might otherwise have fair play. Also, a hobby often becomes obnoxious to those with whom you live. Furthermore, a hobby is sure to be provoking even to its worshipper, intruding at inconvenient times. Yet, let us do justice to hobbies. They take people out of themselves. They make you say to yourself, "If I have a hobby, and wish to ride my hobby, so must I let others ride theirs. We must all have room."

Mr. Leslie was aware that his mother-in-law had a hobby, upon which she rode upon every occasion. He may, therefore, be pardoned if he did not welcome her to his peaceful abode within the circle of the

Cinder Tip with as much genuine warmth as his Emily. Also, he knew his Emily had a weakness. She could not say, "No" to any one, much less her mother. It might so chance that Emily, docile and obedient to her mother—even as her own little Adeline to her—would sometimes have to choose between her husband's wishes and her mother's orders.

"After all," thought John to himself, "Paradise need not be described as a place of superhuman beauty. It is the companions that embellish and bedeck Paradise, not the place. I must make a note of that."

John wrote a journal. We extract a remark:—

"My Emily's mother arrived to-day. She is a good woman, with the remains of great beauty, but could never have possessed my Emily's countenance." (John was very fond of pretty people, which is often the case with

plain, grave men). “She is a clever woman, and has published one or two works, the latter of which has gone through a second edition, and will probably be adopted by the Christian Knowledge Society. I think it well written. I also have a design that way. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to assist me with the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit in this purpose. Grant that what I may do may be done to Thy glory, and not with the vain wish of seeking the applause of men. If I have a talent, O Lord, let me seek the interest for Thy glory. This I ask for Jesus Christ, His sake. Amen.

“I have an ambition within me which, I trust, may lead to a laudable end; and, for this purpose, an analysis of Hooker’s ‘Ecclesiastical Polity’ may not be amiss upon which to devote myself, having thought it now for some time, one of the best books I ever read.”

No doubt, though he did not say it, John



wished his intended work might reach a second edition, even as his mother-in-law's book (and I—I devoutly accord with him in that wish, and write it down, too). Lady Bernard began to perceive a cloud impending over the peaceful parsonage.

Lord Bernard pooh-poohed her down.

“I care not what disagreeables may happen—Mrs. Leslie will certainly smooth them all away.”

“But she defers so much to her mother, my dear lord—she is as obedient as if unmarried.”

“I trow, my good wife, marriage does not prevent an affectionate daughter loving her mother as much after as she did before that marriage.”

“Good husband, bear my words in mind; a little cloud—large as a man's hand—rises on the Cinder Tip.”

“So like women—they are not to be convinced, and will have the last word,”

quoth my lord; and, slamming the door, off he went, thus proving his words a libel on the spot.

Mrs. Reine saw signs of grace in Miss Charles that no one else did. Or rather, because she was repellent to most people—her personal appearance influencing the weak-minded—her unrefined character the more sensible—so did Mrs. Reine think it necessary to take her part. In fact, so large and charitable was that good lady's heart—that the poorer, the plainer, the more disagreeable a person was, the more she favoured them.

Miss Charles was a delighted and sanguine proselyte. Tea at the parsonage, whenever the Spirit moved her to long for a little holy converse, was so agreeable, that her heart was almost daily stirred within her. She had taken, from the very first moment of seeing her, a strange liking for Mrs. Leslie. Her nature, naturally

hard and unwomanly, yet felt an adoration for what it most wanted, and it sufficed her only to look at Emily and watch her. Her feminine ways, her tender grace, her delicate playfulness, and the many domestic beauties which adorned her character, filled Miss Charles with new and refreshing excitement; and it is probable that, at the bottom of her heart, there lingered a stronger wish to assimilate herself, if possible, a little more to womanhood than ever possessed her before. Thus, what delighted Mrs. Reine, as the work of her untiring zeal, in reality was caused all unconsciously by her daughter. But these constant visits of Miss Charles were not the less disagreeable to Mr. Leslie.

He began by thinking it not altogether a sign of grace that Miss Charles should always drop in at tea-time, and always bring her maid Betty (who he feared was a gossip) with her, on the plea that she

must be guarded safely home at night.

Mrs. Reine scorned the idea. And if Betty was a gossip, it behoved Mrs Reine to take her in hand too. She was glad Leslie had given her the hint.

In those days it was the fashion to call everyone by their surname. Even young ladies called their bosom friends "Smith, Jones, Jenkins, Thomson," putting the pronoun "my" before it, to soften and render that tender which was erst most ugly.

"Then, is Betty also to drink tea with us?" remarked Mr. Leslie.

"No—why—no, my dear Leslie," answered Mrs. Reine, who, guiltless of a lively idea herself, did not know a covert sarcasm when she encountered one.

"Ah ! that's well—otherwise, my dear wife, I should be glad to have my tea in the study."

"Now, my dear Leslie, you are the last person who would care, I should have

thought, to take a dish of tea with one in a lower station of life than yourself."

In those days people called cups "dishes," when applied to tea.

"I should not object, madam, once or even twice in a period of time; but to have Betty every other evening to tea, would, I consider, be disagreeable to me, and very much more so to her."

"Of course, of course, my dear Leslie. Emily, send Adeline to me, I must cut off her curls."

"Oh, mamma! they are so very pretty, only just beginning to curl out of her eyes. I was admiring them to John only this morning."

"Then, my dear, that is an additional reason why they should be at once cut off. If her mother cannot refrain from encouraging vanity in her daughter, think what mischief may be engendered by the folly of less indifferent persons."

By this time Mrs. Reine had the little creature on her knee. As she looked for her scissors, a certain strong hand lifted the child safe from danger.

Adeline, being of a confiding nature, bore all these changes with surprising fortitude, rather charmed than otherwise at the unwonted dignity of being in papa's arms.

"Madam, I am vain of my little daughter's curls, and I like to be vain of them. I will not have them touched."

Emily looked up gratefully at John.

"Oh, very well; of course her father's wishes must be considered. Poor little Adeline! But, Leslie, I have forgotten to mention a circumstance to you. I met to-day, in my rounds among the people, a very intelligent person, named Powell" (John winced). "By-the-by, Emily, ring the bell, he is coming here this evening, and will, I daresay, require something more substantial than a dish of tea."

John rose up suddenly, and then sat down again.

“Did you also, my dear madam, hear that he is a dissenting preacher?”

“Of course, my dear Leslie, and it is for that reason I invited him here this evening. I have very fervent hopes that I may convert him.”

“I fear not—the man is essentially of a low, unseemly nature. He is not well considered even among his own people. He is of habits, of practices, that unfit him for the society of ladies.”

“But you put out your hand to him, Leslie.”

“True; so I do to the dying soul, even if he be lying in a ditch—but I say at once, now and for all, Emily retires to her own room when this man comes. I remain with you, if you desire it.”

“You amaze me, Leslie—I may say, you shock me; you appear to practise so little what you preach.”



John walked out of the room ; he was irascible, we fear, a little. But if he was unreasonably so, he was properly punished ; he met in the hall Miss Charles, escorted by Mr. Powell and another person, who was as little gifted in his personal appearance as his companion, and who was unknown to Mr. Leslie.

Recovering himself, if he was irritated, Mr. Leslie politely bowed, and requesting Miss Charles to go into the drawing-room, he took the two men with him into his study. He ordered a simple refecton of bread, cheese, and ale, discoursing amiably upon all sorts of matters.

Then with a degree of wickedness of which no one could have believed until that moment Mr. Leslie was capable, he ordered in the spirit-case, hot water, sugar, and lemons ; and when his two visitors were in a genial glow, and the little study redolent of brandy, he suddenly asked if they did

not come to see his respected mother-in-law?

“Of course they did, and were to have had the honour of a dish of tea; but, indeed, for their parts, Mr. Leslie understood their likings best. Good ale, sound cheese, and a dash of brandy-and-water were by much the finer cheer. Tea was never much to their taste.”

“Well,” quoth that wicked John to himself, as he went to bring her, “I have lost my own tea, but I think I have done a good business to-night.”

Mrs. Reine was essentially refined in every sense, though when she was riding her hobby the senses somehow slumbered.

The first shock of the brandy-and-water was great; but not so great as the inward view she had of the natures of these men. Emboldened by their cheer, they argued and talked, and preached and roared, until, stunned and frightened, she deserted the

field, and was an object of unquestionable gratification to John the next morning—pale and subdued under the authoritative power of a headache.

## CHAPTER XII.

“ An honest man is still an unmoved rock,  
Washed whiter, but not shaken with the shock ;  
Whose heart conceives no sinister device—  
Fearless he plays with flames, and treads on ice.”

DAVENPORT.

YET, good general as he proved himself, Mr. Leslie was nearly defeated another way.

Of course these people boasted of their reception and their success, neither report losing by repetition—for Rumour was quite as dishonest then as now. So Mr. Leslie lost ground in the eyes of many of his parishioners. His kindly word and friendly shake of the hand were not worth so much, if he admitted to his board and intimacy such cha-

racters. Lady Bernard flew to Miss Hill for advice upon the breath of these rumours reaching the Castle, and she met both the Miss Hills coming to her on the same errand. Even their distant hamlet was murmuring a sullen discontent.

To noble natures like theirs, it was a stab to each heart, any failure in the conduct of the man on whom they built such hopes. Yet, though they talked, consulted, reasoned, it appeared, the more they did so, the more were they convinced it was the only things they could do.

Mr. Leslie went about as usual, as if he had nothing on his conscience. So far from his sermons savouring of anything philanthropic, innovating, or revolutionary, they had a bias entirely the other way—(good reader, he was preaching to Mrs. Reine). Emily bore her usual face of calm serenity; her mother was quiet, and mildly complacent. The mere remembrance of that evening

brought back the smell of brandy to her sensitive nostrils, and prognosticated a headache.

Lord Bernard, though he heard the same rumours, would suffer nothing to be said at the parsonage. "Let Mr. Leslie fight it out alone: if he failed, Mrs. Leslie would soon smile down the reports."

Thanks to Miss Charles and Betty, and a few more such characters, they kept gathering and gathering.

Anon the mothers arose, like the mothers in Israel. Sixty-three girls had had their hair cut round, short, and alike, by Mrs. Reine's own hand; sixty-three girls were disfigured, and made to look so alike, their own mothers scarcely knew them; and of course, though the parson's mother had done it, the parson was really the person that ordered it.

Unconscious of the tumult within the houses, which began to show itself outwardly as he was seen approaching on his daily

visits, Mr. Leslie passed on, unheeding the angry cries sent after him. His mind was full of a secret plan, upon which he reasoned as to the propriety of consulting Lord Bernard. Abruptly startled from his reverie, Mr. Leslie looked up, and saw before him a phalanx of dirty, angry women, and a group of shame-faced girls, cropped as closely and badly as if their heads were stubble-fields.

“Dear me!” exclaimed Mr. Leslie, his vocabulary of expletives being but small—“I hope no accident—poor girls!—sad thing!—not burnt, I trust?”

Either Mr. Leslie was an unabashed hypocrite, or entirely innocent. The crowd wavered.

Receiving no answer, and thinking his spectacles deceived him, Mr. Leslie deliberately tucked his invariable companion, an umbrella (then generally made of scarlet silk), under his arm—took them off—carefully wiped them—and put them on again.



“Ha, ha! You knows, my blackbird!” began a stout, sarcastic female. The crowd wanted but the initiatory word. Forthwith began a clamour and a clang of invectives, sufficient to startle the stoutest police of the present day. No such worthy body being then known—nothing but constables selected from the oldest and most crippled among the population—Mr. Leslie had to face the warfare alone, which he did most resolutely. Dirty fingers were snapped close to his nose, the vilest words screamed in his ear; yet he stood patient and calm—no outward fear on his face—no inward thought in his heart but that of pity.

A few men loitered on the outskirts, not ill-pleased at this demonstration on the part of their better halves.

So like men. Let one of the same drabbed set of ladies “open tongue” on her still more begrimed spouse, and a good thrashing is most

probably her portion ; but they do not dislike to see them attack another.

The uproar ceasing from a real want of breath, Mr. Leslie, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the nearest girl to him, said—

“My good child, of what do you complain—tell me your grief?”

His well-known voice appeared to have a soothing and harmonious effect upon the viragos who surrounded him.

“It warn’t like him to do it,” said one.

“No, he be mazed-like,” said another.

“Thee mund send thee mother away,” said a third.

“And why should I send my mother away?” asked Mr. Leslie, peremptorily turning round on the last speaker.

The woman looked confused, but by degrees began to let him into the secret of their attack.

“I consider your conduct unseemly. Even if I had ordered the girls’ hair to be cut

off, could you not have trusted me that it was for some good purpose? But I had nothing to do with it. I am sorry for it in one way, namely, that it has been badly done. I like my little girls to look nice, clean, and tidy. I dare say, had I thought about it, I might have considered it best that their hair should be shortened, but I should have called upon their mother and asked the permission to have it done——”

“And so a wud, I do know,” exclaimed a voice.

“Now, as Mrs. Reine has done it without the permission,” continued Mr. Leslie, “I recommend you all to go to the pump, at the parsonage, and wash your heads well. Mrs. Leslie will be sure to see you, and come out to ask the reason; her mother will follow. Then if you cannot prove to her that she is a bad hair-cutter, you are more silly girls than I take you for. Now, suffer me to pass—ye know

not what evil ye are committing, keeping me from the beds of the sick and dying."

A lane was opened immediately for him—a murmur of self-reproach hummed through the multitude.

That evening, Mr. Leslie, finding his drawing-room full with the members of the Dorcas Society, being presided over by Mrs. Reine, took his hat and walked up to the Castle.

Here was propounded the great scheme.

"I think you are looking out for a tutor for your sons, my lord?"

"'Tis true, my friend, and I have lamented to my wife that your onerous duties prevented your undertaking the office."

"I should like to do so. Teaching, or rather the love of it, is inherent in my nature. Yet I would not indulge it, at the cost of higher duties. You are aware, my lord, that my parochial labours are of

little use to the working part of my parishioners until the evening, owing to their peculiar duties in the mines. Thus, I have many unoccupied hours in the day that I have hitherto devoted to my own private delight in reading and writing; and I am about publishing a book, with the hope of realizing a sum of money to enable me to keep a curate."

"Keep a curate, Mr. Leslie?—you amaze me!"

"Yes, my lord, I must keep a curate, even if my book does not sell. The few hours that the miners can attend to me are so very short, that 'tis impossible to do my duty by one half of them. I must either go about with a burthened conscience, or I must keep a curate to help me. Two of us could do it well. Now, if my book does not sell, yet, undertaking the education of your boys during those hours that my services are useless to the miners, I

shall realize, I trust, a sufficient sum for my curate."

"My dear sir, my dear Mr. Leslie, it ought not to fall upon you—you have little enough."

"Nay, we are rich now; and, indeed, I should not have thought it necessary to take pupils—my mother-in-law being a generous woman, but—but we must part. Her presence under our roof is neither good for Emily nor myself. Had it been otherwise, I need not have troubled you about my wishes at all; but, to-night, my Emily must tell her mother we keep house no longer together. There can only be one master there, and that is myself."

Lord Bernard looked at Mr. Leslie in astonishment. He had not given him credit for such determination. As if in answer to the look, Mr. Leslie detailed his adventure with the women, winding up by saying—

"As long as my mother-in-law (she is a

good woman) remains under my roof, I am answerable for her deeds. And as we differ in many points, I intend to be answerable no longer."

Mr. Leslie had apparently nothing more to say.

Lord Bernard, after assuring him that he desired no better tutor for his boys, hummed, and hawed, and hesitated. He wished to tell Mr. Leslie that he felt himself bound to pay the curate's salary, even though Mr. Leslie gained the sum sufficient by his tutorship. But an awe of what the simple-minded, conscientious man would think, a certain dread of hurting his upright heart, and wounding that integrity so essentially a part of himself, prevented him uttering more than a few confused words. And before he could make anything clear, Mr. Leslie had bid him good night, and was gone.

"I must double the terms for the boys



—I must speak to the curate myself—or, better still, I will go and consult my wife.”

Never was a wiser decision.

“Of course, my dear lord, the whole matter is most feasible. Offer Mrs. Reine your vacant house, the White Lodge, rent free, on condition she boards and takes care of the curate. She will thus have an area of her own, in which to bestir herself, without dragging others into the vortex. We must select a peculiar curate, the care of whom will doubtless occupy much of her time. She will thus have a vocation—the curate will require but a small salary from Mr. Leslie—say 50*l.* a-year, boarded and lodged, as he will be, for nothing at Mrs. Reine’s. The hill is very steep up to her house, and my dear Mrs. Leslie will not often be able to get there, I feel sure.”

“My dear wife, are you going to cease

chattering? When a woman gets a good idea into her head, she won't even give one time to thank her for it, she is so full of it."

"Well, now, thank me."

It was thus that Lord and Lady Bernard quarrelled.

Blessed is the praise pronounced by the lips most honoured. Blessed are the looks sent back in return. Lord Bernard went himself to Mrs. Reine, and offered her the White House. As he walked down to the parsonage he essayed to himself various modes in which the offer should be made, so as to ensure the acceptance of it, for in his heart he feared Mrs. Reine was an obstinate woman. He had half-wished his wife to manage the delicate matter.

"No," said she; "Mrs. Reine would not even hear what I was saying. She is so practical, that unless I came in your name, with a donation of coal in my

hand (I mean on paper, don't laugh, Henry), she would not heed me. Though she is such a thorough gentlewoman, she only sees wisdom in men."

Now, conjecturing, as he had been, as to the manner in which she would accept his plan, he was utterly confounded by what did happen. It was on this wise.

He propounded the whole matter. She said nothing, though generally a very voluble woman. He complimented her—suddenly she rose, opened the sitting-room door abruptly, and called, "Emily, Emily!"

"Now," said Lord Bernard, mentally, "what have I done? Offended her, I suppose. Oh, women! what enigmas you are!"

Lord Bernard's principal failing was a general desire to put the blame of everything upon women; and often in consequence, as his wife proved to him, he was

well punished for it, by being signally in the wrong. My readers shall judge how he fared this time.

“My dear Emily,” said her mother, solemnly, as she entered, “our prayers are answered—kiss me, child.”

“Mamma, you mean about the school. Lord Bernard consents.”

“Not at all, child—as yet Lord Bernard knows nothing about the school. But he has opened a way for me to begin, without injustice to you, Emily, or Leslie.”

“Dear mamma, how can you be unjust to us, following out the dictates of your own generous heart? By fulfilling your wishes, do you not lay up for us and our children a greater inheritance in the world to come.”

Now, though this was a speech after Mrs. Reine's own heart, still she was of too practical a nature to be as enthusiastic as Emily.

“My dear child, hold your tongue. Poverty is disagreeable—above all things, a clergyman ought not to be stinted in his means, and if I continued to live with you of course what is mine is yours. But as I can now have a house for nothing I shall remove to it—you will be at no further expense for me; and as I shall not use the whole of my income, of course I shall be able to carry out my views.”

Lord Bernard had listened in silence, thinking Mrs. Leslie as enigmatical as her mother. But when he began to perceive that it was a question between them as to which should be most disinterested, to himself he acknowledged his injustice. And very highly both ladies rose in his esteem when at last he gathered the facts.

It was Mrs. Reine's ambition to build a school—lofty, airy—in every way a model school. As long as she lived at the parsonage she did not feel justified in lessen-

ing her income to do this good. She had proffered it to her children—it was theirs. But now, since all parties would be benefited by the new arrangement, nothing could be more felicitous.

Mr. Leslie could have his curate at a cost that was a great deal more than counterbalanced by his stipend as tutor. He and Emily had sufficient wealth of their own to live with luxuries (as they thought then, poor benighted things), even if they had not their mother's added.

Lord and Lady Bernard were delighted to have Mr. Leslie as tutor for their boys.

And as for Mrs. Reine, she was in the White House within the week. She and her maid, Milner, took the opportunity of making the experiment of how little was necessary for them to live upon, before the curate came. Every penny was to be saved for "The School."

## CHAPTER XIII.

“In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill—  
For even though vanquished he could argue still ;  
While words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;  
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew.”

GOLDSMITH.

AND a noble school it was. Lord Bernard gave the ground, of course. Mrs. Reine, with the consent of her children, sunk 1500*l.* in building and endowing it, with permanent salaries for the master and mistress. As it rose, stone upon stone, it became the pride of the valley, and of those for whose welfare it was reared. It had



a higher destiny yet. It spurred on many a wealthy but careless ironmaster to "go and do likewise." No one looked upon it without feeling an impulse within him for good, compelling him to acknowledge that as he drew such vast wealth from the bountiful bosom of the earth, there was no surer payment of gratitude than benefiting her sons. Mrs. Reine's school became the model of many others—the focus from whence others radiated. It was not reared in human pride, but in a noble generosity that neither heard nor understood the flatteries of less high-minded natures. The Valley of a Hundred Fires wanted such an edifice. Mrs. Reine thought herself privileged that she was permitted to erect it — nothing more. Thus, if she had for a short time caused any uncomfortableness between Mr. Leslie and his parishioners, it was now amply atoned for. The good madam, as she was called from her stately ways—her

high-heeled shoes, vast dimity petticoats, and muslin turban — dispensing physic, flannel, and advice in equal proportions, might have a few crotchets, but she was a grand lady for all that.

It is not to be supposed that Lord Bernard had no schools before. On the contrary, he had been at great expense for the good of his people. But Mrs. Reine, far-seeing, and a good deal enlightened by her friendship with Mrs. Hannah More, was the first to build one of those large, airy structures, of which so many models may be seen now in every county ; and to inaugurate a Sunday School as well.

In this she was universally assisted by all the ladies in the neighbourhood.

No happier work could be given the Miss Hills — no more delighted labourer over the little A B C class than good Mrs. Dawson. And if Mrs. Robarts's interest in the school confined itself to a donation of books,

had she not reason to excuse herself? Was she not now the mother of a very fine son and heir, whose well-being could only be preserved by the incessant watchfulness and care of his doting mother?

Thus it will be seen that all matters were prospering in the Valley of a Hundred Fires. Especially at the parsonage. Adeline was growing prettier every day, and young Jeffreys was becoming seriously enamoured, spending all his pocket-money on sugar plums for her. Little John (Emily thought she had had all her own way, but big John was very sly—he had baptized his own son “John Æmylius,” and she did not discover it until too late. However, she indemnified herself—inconvenient as it was—baby went by the name of “Little John,” and no surreptitious “Æmylius” was allowed) — well, little John (a most lovely boy by the way) could now walk and talk. Therefore, neither my readers

nor big John had any right to be surprised that one evening Wilson (now by the children only known as Wilsy) opened the study door, her Roman nose shining and red, "Missus is all safe, sir."

"Thank God!" exclaimed John. He was getting accustomed to these little events. No knot this time prevented the extraction of the expected half-sovereign. (Ah, good John! if you could only take a peep into futurity, you might see that which would suggest the propriety of reducing that fee of thanksgiving into five shillings, or indeed omitting it altogether).

"It is——" began John, dubiously.

"Yes, sir, it's a girl," answered Wilsy; "thank ye, sir."

Now, John was not satiated in his love for boys. He was rather disappointed; then—angry with himself.

"I thank God," said he, meekly. "You will let me know when I may visit my dear wife."

“Yes, sir, thank ye, sir,” and vanished.

John took quite as much pains to prevent Emily hearing his creaking shoes as if she had given him another son. And he kissed her as fondly and gratefully.

Also, he bestowed a fatherly salute upon a lanky, yellow baby that Wilsy produced for that purpose.

“She is the tallest, or rather the longest, baby I ever seed,” said the old nurse, feeling it necessary to say something in praise of the baby.

Mr. Leslie, as he looked at it, felt glad it had something about it to be admired; and then, bidding them prepare to have it baptized at six in the evening, he departed down-stairs.

Now, Emily, smitten with all things Welsh, was determined to have a Welsh name for her new daughter. She gave herself a vast deal of unnecessary trouble in selecting the prettiest, changing and changing again and

again; as if, this being her last daughter, she had no further chance of distinguishing them with the cognomens of the Cwmri. John was standing in his surplice in the nursery, waiting, book open, holy-water ready, for her decision.

In those days people read the prayers in their prayer-books much more often than the rubrics, so that Mr. Leslie was not aware of the flagrant act he was committing, in always baptizing his children in their own nursery, within twelve hours of their birth. He made them the children of God as soon as ever he could, carrying them to church to be christened afterwards, according to the time of year.

At last came Emily's decision; and to prevent John making any mistake, she had with her weak fingers written down the name—"Nest." John shook his head, spelt it over, pronounced it, and for a moment there appeared a probability he would



refuse altogether to give even so plain and uninteresting a baby such an extraordinary name. However, the thought that Emily must not be contradicted just came in time. Yet was John again very sly; and though he rather slurred it over, both the nurses heard another name as well. "Nest Cecilia" was now the style and title by which the lanky baby was to be distinguished from her fellow-mortals.

Mr. Leslie had happened just to think of the picture of St. Cecilia down in the dining-room, playing on a fiddle; and Mrs. Reine's turban in the doorway of Emily's room put him in mind of the same head-dress that adorned the saint. To such flights and follies does imagination lead even the gravest of us, at the gravest moment.

"Perhaps little Cecilia"—Mr. Leslie designated her so on the spot—"may prove a musician."

It may be as well here to remark that



poor Mr. Leslie's hopes that way were signal failures.

But no mention has been made of a very much more important character in this book—namely, the curate.

Now, the coming of this curate had caused many heart-burnings among many people. Not because he was a curate, or unexpected, but partly because of his antecedents, and partly for the reason he gave for wishing to obtain a curacy in Wales. Both, allowed even by Mr. Leslie not to be exactly the sort of thing he could wish—while Mrs. Reine openly declared she would have nothing to do with him, high as were his testimonials and character. For his antecedents—he had spent the greater portion of his life at sea, as chaplain on board men-of-war—of course he would be a roystering, blustering, boisterous fellow, given to snuff, grog, and loud talking.

As for his reason for coming, it bore no

trace of a godly character in Mrs. Reine's eyes—he wished to learn the Welsh language. He had a passion—it was for learning languages; and that he might indulge his bent, he had engaged himself as chaplain on board of different vessels, for the express purpose of learning every known tongue.

Upon the whole, this was not a deadly sin. No doubt but Mrs Reine would work him up ere long to do his duties from a higher motive. So he came.

Never was expectation so entirely deceived, and mentally knocked down.

Personally he was a small, neat little man, scrupulously clean and trim. His deeply-bronzed face shone out the more conspicuous, because of his hair, which resembled the finest white wool. His manner was a mixture of simplicity, courtesy, and playfulness. He bowed over Mrs. Reine's hand every morning, with the profound re-

spect of a knight to his lady; yet in a quiet but somewhat comical humour, he objected to the dietary system lately adopted by herself and maiden.

“He did not think it necessary,” he remarked, “to experimentalize upon how little would sustain life. He had the fancy rather to try whether he could not, in his short life-time, thoroughly enjoy all that the good God permitted us to use on this prolific earth.”

He was so learned, there was nothing he did not know—from every star, which he mentioned familiarly as if they were bosom friends, down to the proper mashing of turnips—“which,” he said, “was a vegetable wholesome, inexpensive, and delicious; but it was all the better for being well-drained, and having a little cream mixed with it,” which Milner considered an unnecessary dainty.

“Ah! perhaps it is; then for the future,

good Milner, we will expunge turnips from the class vegetable. Turnips do not grow here, they are unknown — unless, indeed, there should chance to be a little cream to spare.”

The number of languages he knew would have required the calculating boy to sum up. And the facility with which he acquired Welsh amazed his parishioners, who looked upon him with awe and wonder.

By degrees he grew into the hearts of every one. The very sound of his strong guttural voice called forth a shout of delight. Mrs. Reine herself acknowledged, “Though I fear he is not wholly evangelical and orthodox, but rather theoretic and pedantic, yet — I do — love the little dear man.”

And he gave her active mind plenty to do. For when once absorbed in some of his beloved sciences, the house might have tumbled about his ears, and he would have

been oblivious of the fact, until he was sprawling amid the *débris*.

In these absent moods there was no eccentricity he did not commit—that is, against himself. Having forgotten dinner and tea, she looked in just in time to prevent his munching a great piece out of his soap. Yet, at other times, there was no deceiving him.

Calling upon Miss Charles, to her indignant surprise he took no second sip of the wine she proffered him, or another morsel of her celebrated ginger-bread, and being urged so to do more than once—

“Madam,” he replied, “I object to a mixture in liquids, especially when vinegar predominates; and the ginger-bread, doubtless, is most excellent—but my mother spoilt me, and always put sugar in hers, and not sand.”

And there was no quarrelling with him. Miss Charles had a mind to be indignant; but

he looked so calm, pleasant, and smiling—he examined with such interest a dusty specimen of the nest of the solitary wasp—and he talked so learnedly, evidently giving her credit for understanding all he said, that her anger turned into complacency. And she charged Betty, on his departure, to remember and bring up the best wine and some good short cake every time the new curate came to call. Betty promised, but having had her love for gossip strongly fostered by her mistress, confided to a neighbour maiden-of-all-work, her peculiar friend, the order, and both together agreed that “ould boddy,” as they irreverently called Miss Charles, “was certainly a meaning summat by such an extraordinary order.”

With children he was an especial favourite; and finding that, partly owing to Mrs. Roberts’s son and heir attracting all attention, and partly to her not

being so pretty as the other two children, the new baby at the parsonage was not thought much about, he proffered to stand godfather, and chose Mrs. Dawson as his co-partner in the charge, Lady Armitage being the third.

He promised the unconscious, long, yellow baby a marvellous imparting of learning when a fitting time should come. And he began his duties as godfather by presenting her with a "Thesaurus of the English Language," that she might from her earliest infancy be well grounded in that rich, harmonious, comprehensive, and truly philosophic language—her own.

Mrs. Reine was scandalized that he had not made his first gift a Bible.

"A Bible, good madam! that is the duty of her godmammass. My present will teach her how to value her Bible. But, madam, can you tell me the earliest time known to you of the capability of the



infant tongue pronouncing sensible sounds correlative with the intellect?"

"I presume you mean, Mr. Sabine, when will your god-daughter be able to talk—and talking, understand what she says."

"True, good madam, that plainly expresses my meaning. In the decimal lunar, think you?"

"Decimal nonsense. Little John does not talk plainly yet, and he is only two years old; and Adeline, more than three, does not know her letters."

"But my infantile charge shows great signs of intelligence. She gazed upon her Thesaurus with very large, wide, open, intelligent eyes. She appreciated her present."

"The dinner has been announced, my dear sir—let us go!"

"Willingly, madam. I have been conscious some time of a vacuum. God be

thanked for what we are going—chops! I like chops, especially with mashed potatoes, but I object to chops administered daily. Nevertheless, let us be thankful. I have before now been glad to chew a small portion of the dried skin of an animal that by mechanical means is brought to a state called leather, and then made into shoes.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

“ Was it not lovely to behold  
A cherub come down from the sky,  
A beauteous thing of heavenly mould,  
With ringlets of the wavy gold  
Dancing and floating curiously?  
To see it come down on the earth,  
This beauteous thing of heavenly birth!  
Leaving the fields of balm and bliss,  
To dwell in such a world as this? ”

COLERIDGE.

THAT last remark of Mr. Sabine's led to the discovery that in his search after knowledge he had gone through many hardships. Amongst others, he had accompanied a whale-ship to Baffin's Bay, for the express purpose of being intro-

duced to the Esquimaux, and learning their language. During one of his excursions from the ship on mainland they had become short of provisions, and he had dined and supped for a couple of days upon a pair of his old shoes. He did not expatiate much upon the beauty and literature of the Esquimaux tongue : on the contrary, he was very adroit in turning away the subject whenever brought forward.

About this time Mr. Robarts, with the consent of Lord Bernard, became a partner in a large iron-work about to be established in a neighbouring valley. There was every prospect, if it succeeded, of his becoming a very wealthy man ; and so far from objecting to his agent becoming as rich as himself, Lord Bernard rejoiced that one who had served him so faithfully should reap a good reward.

He had the prospect of having a very

large family. His wife had all the elements of a fine lady about her, and certainly had never been fit to rough it in the world.

Mr. Robarts, having done his duty as servant to his lord, and come out scathless, was now to undergo the greater trial of independence and wealth.

This new state of things had no immediate effect upon him, but it made an instantaneous change in Mrs. Robarts.

Her house was newly furnished and enlarged. She had an English governess as well as a foreign one. She threw off the friendship of every second-rate person in the neighbourhood, and reduced them to the safer ground of mere acquaintanceship. She imitated Lady Bernard in her ways, her orders, and the height of her footmen, then as much a mark of *ton* as now.

She talked fine, even to that simplest, sweetest Emily, who never would or could

perceive the least change in "dear Mrs. Roberts"—though Miss Charles's indignation sounded louder than the Forges, and the Miss Hills were openly piqued, Mrs. Reine disdainfully wroth, and good Mrs. Dawson timidly shocked and ashamed. The change even reached Wilsy's nursery, who, long having reigned in proud triumph as the nurse of the healthiest, most beautiful children ever seen, had now to bear the sight of the five little pale but pretty Miss Robartses going about in a grand carriage, with a powdered footman to open the carriage door for them; and nurse, their nurse, not a bit better born or bred than herself, driving in the carriage too, dressed in a black silk dress, which, though dyed, as Wilsy well knew, yet looked as good as new. There was no friendship now between them, "nor never would be no more," as Wilsy emphatically remarked to that patient, unchangeable Anne, who

said "Dinner is served, 'm," every day in the same voice and manner as when she, by so doing, dismissed Lord and Lady Bernard.

"Hi, set her up indeed!" remarked Betty, who had taken advantage of her missus being out to pop over to the parsonage, where she was decidedly a favourite. "Manners for me, if ye please, afore yer silks and satins. Them as misbehaved brats as iver I set eyes on, and no fit to be beside my young lord here. Ay, Master John, but yer a born beauty, ye darlin', and Miss is the pictir of her pretty mither. No but what yer a fine babby. 'Deed, Mrs. Nurse, she grows fine, and has the wonderfulest eyes I ever saw. She beats the grand soon and heir out and out, though she be the younger, sax weeks or so."

The above speech may account for Betty's popularity at the parsonage.



Now, time speeds on, and will wait for none of us. The excitement of the new school had become absorbed in the growing benefit it was bestowing on the rising generation.

The love and respect of the people for their rector and his curate were now a part of their being. It appeared as if they had no more lived without them than one of their own limbs, and could as little exist in comfort as if from them they were indebted for the breath they drew. So much had these two men identified themselves with those among whom they lived.

Meantime, events occurred of various sorts. The Bernards again left home. The little Leslies had the measles, and were taken to the sea-side for change of air. Sir Edward and Lady Armitage wrote about coming down. Miss Charles had been at death's door, but was nursed

to life by Mrs. Reine. Mr. Sabine, experimentalizing on poisons, had taken a small portion of one, but had forgotten to swallow the antidote, which, though placed by him, in his absence of mind, he regarded as some mess put there by Mrs. Reine, and nothing but the extraordinary nerve and vigilance of that good lady saved his life. Aware of what he was doing (indeed he would have been more than mortal could he have executed the smallest manœuvre without her cognizance), she had been on the watch, and spying his indignant thrust on the fire of this important antidote, she had rushed in with a tumbler full of diluted mustard, which she had manufactured ready to her hand in case of such an emergency; and by the joint efforts of herself and Milner, it was down his throat ere he was aware of their intention. However painful the effects, he

acknowledged his debt by expressing his gratitude in no less than nine languages, which edified Milner, and amply repaid her, though her mistress had not time to listen even to grateful jargons.

Also, during this period, Mrs. Robarts had what Betty called another “soon and hair;” while Emily——. It must be told.

Wilsy again appeared. Again John had to give half-a-sovereign.

This time he asked no questions. It was enough “that missus was safe.”

In fact, John’s tender conscience had often smote him for his ungrateful conduct on the birth of Nest, or Nessie, as she was now called; and, in consequence, he had endeavoured to be an extremely attentive father to her. And secretly he really did favour her a good deal. She was a great, big girl, more like a boy. She loved to be tossed about and romped with, and was a fearless, confiding little

maiden. Moreover, he was pleased with her *nom de caresse*, Nessie—it was pretty, soft, and not so very extraordinary.

But, behold! there now lay by Emily's pillow the fairest little morsel of a baby ever seen, whose caressing fingers already closed round her mothers', whose little dewy mouth was like the tiniest rose-bud, and her blue eyes had the soft hue of Heaven in them.

Lady Bernard and Miss Hill claimed her for their own at once. Mrs Robarts's second son, though he had the grandest of christenings, could not be named with this little atom of loveliness. Emily's Welsh names were all scouted—Mr. Leslie was strictly watched, so that no surreptitious title might be given instead of that they had chosen. Whether he approved or not, Pearl was to be the name, and Pearl she was baptized.

“Well,” remarked John to Emily, on her

first appearance downstairs, "I thank you very much, my dear wife, for my three daughters. I have a good daughter, a tall daughter, and a pretty daughter. I feel quite contented, and think myself very rich indeed; and you may depend upon it, I am not so exorbitant as to wish for more."

"Three daughters, dear John, are not too many for us. Mrs. Robarts has five."

"God forbid that I should prevent her having five more; but three is an excellent number for us, Emily. I think three a fortunate number."

Thereupon John began a dissertation upon the virtues attending the number three, deducing his arguments from so many learned and excellent authorities, that it was fortunate Mr. Sabine came in, and plunged at once into so erudite a question, otherwise Emily would probably have ended the evening by a headache,

stunned with the learning John brought forth for this purpose.

It was agreed that, instead of Sir Edward and Lady Armitage coming down to Wales, Emily, Mr. Leslie, and Adeline should all take a holiday for the first time since their arrival, and visit them.

Adeline was now five years old; she had two sisters. Lady Armitage was beginning to send a hurricane of letters regarding that promise made her so long ago, and never fulfilled; and threatened to come by force and carry her off. Mrs. Reine decreed that Emily must have change; her light footstep was become slow; her beaming countenance retained the sweetness without the beam; her elastic spirit was a little subdued.

“Ah! go, go, my friend,” said Mr. Sabine; “I will put away my books, and think of nothing but duty, if you will but bring back our Sunbeam more bright than ever.”

It was an important affair leaving home for the first time since their arrival in Wales, now four years ago. But they went with the good wishes of every one that they might enjoy their holiday to the utmost. That Emily should leave as few cares behind her as possible, Mrs. Dawson undertook the care of Nessie and Pearl, while John accompanied his parents and Adeline—Wilsy in charge of all. Grandmamma was apt to administer vast doses of physic to the little ones, so they were sent to the doctor's, as the safest place against such danger. Not the only case where the lion's den saves you from the lion.

They left but one sorrowing heart behind them—that of Jeffreys, who, after bewailing the departure of Adeline with the wild sorrow of a first deadly disappointment in love, at the end of a week placed his lacerated heart in the keeping of the romping Nest, thus giving another instance to the world of



that curious anomaly in love—namely, that so sure as a heart is disappointed, it is caught in the rebound by the most opposite thing to the first idol.

Adeline was a staid and discreet little maiden, with the bluest of eyes, the rosiest of cheeks, and hair that always looked as if Wilsy had just brushed it.

Nest was lanky still, though at the chubbiest age; yellow still, with great staring black eyes, and a quantity of black locks that curled all the wrong way. Imperious and passionate, she was just of the proper temperament to wear an ardent lover into fiddlestrings. But it appeared such a disposition suited Jeffreys. He had no idea “that absence made the heart grow fonder.” On the contrary, his love required to be fed with daily doses of quarrels and makings up, exactions and tormentings; and when he was completely miserable, then was he in the greatest state of agonized delight.

As Emily appeared from the inside of the celebrated Bristol coach (she was no longer sufficiently agile to climb outside), at the very place from whence we first commenced her acquaintance on that drizzly damp morning, what a commotion occurred.

“Dash moy bootons, Jem—d’ye see?”

“Moy heyes, hers it.”

“Thon wull be the baby as wor.”

“Ond her’s the same young ooman as norse.”

“It bain’t no manner of use a stopping ov’ me; I mun spak to her; I’ll make bould to wish her ’ealth and yappiness.”

“Ay, do thou, Jem.”

Thus encouraged, Jem advanced.

“Wishes you well, mum—and the yong family, mum. It wor oi as ’elped your lardyship up to the coach foure year ago, mum. I axes yer parding for being so free.”

“Not at all. I thank you very much,

indeed, for your kind interest. It was a happy day that took us into Wales."

"A moighty foine day for Wailes, mum—axes yer parding." And Jem received various winks from his friends in approbation of this appropriate sentiment; while Emily blushed and smiled at the same time, seeing it all.

"John," she half whispered, "these good people remember us when we were here before. Is it not nice of them?"

John took off his hat and bowed. Then extracting a shilling (a large sum in those days) out of the leather purse, he said:—

"Oblige me by drinking her health. You cannot do it too often to please me."

"We bean't have no manner o' doubt o' that ere, sir, and we wull be sartin sure to do it."

So, with kindly good-byes, Emily was wheeled out of the sight of her rough admirers, who testified their delight at seeing

her once more in various modes peculiar to themselves. One tossed up his hat, another shouted, a third made a sort of wheel of himself; while the fourth, gazing solemnly at the shilling, observed:—

“Lads, we mun do his bidding.”

Whereupon they simultaneously disappeared within the bar, nothing loth.

It may appear strange that Mr. and Mrs. Leslie should give up their child. But they knew the hands into which they were about to deliver her. They had but one fear, and that was—the many advantages she gained in her new home might lessen the love for her old one.

In Mr. Leslie’s diary there occurs this passage:—

“To-day we parted from our first-born, our little Adeline, not without a pang; and yet why should I murmur, O my God? My child has four parents, not two. Her advantages will be many more than

I could ever hope to give her. My house is filling with children—for each new blessing do I thank God; and more than all, that, though my book has not brought me in as much as I expected, and that my means are somewhat straitened, yet we have wanted for nothing, and I am not in debt.”

The little Adeline, her mother’s own daughter, made no moan at parting; she appeared to adopt Lady Armitage as her mother, running, at the first call, to obey the voice so like that familiar one. And when informed that she was to remain behind, and not return, her sole remonstrance was—

“If I am very good, I may see Nessie and Pearl?”

This reminded Mr. Leslie of the promise made by the Armitages, that once a year their girl was to come to see them; and

he reiterated to them that there must be no infringement of it.

Adeline tried to smile, young as she was, even at the parting with little John, which caused Mr. Leslie to record another observation in his journal.

“Little Adeline has a disposition very like her mother, wholly unselfish. When she parted from her brother, I was struck with the evident fortitude shown by one so very young. And yet, of my three daughters she will have probably less scope for such a virtue. Next Cecilia, my second daughter, appears to me deficient in this virtue, and yet will need it more. Of the baby I can at present foretell nothing. The Almighty knows what is fittest for all. May he keep them in the hollow of His hand, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.”

By the time the reader ends this history, if he does not tire before, he will

discover that, wise as Mr. Leslie thought himself in the judgment of his daughter's character, there was One wiser and mightier still.

About this time began one of those rumours of an ill-feeling between the iron-masters and their workpeople. That there was cause for discontent few of them could deny; and Lord Bernard, early setting the example of some little attention to their demands, warded off the evil at first from his own estate. In this he was ably assisted by both the clergymen, but not Mr. Robarts.

The latter was an instance of wealth not proving the surest mode of making a gentleman. He would rather have acted the bully, and browbeat the people into obedience, than have adopted the high-bred forbearance of Lord Bernard.

It is probable that the storm-cloud of discontent would have passed over the



Valley of the Hundred Fires, and left little trace behind ; but there was another evil at work, and that insidiously.

Powell, the Dissenter, had long begun to discover that Mr. Leslie and he could no more be called rivals. By the voice of the multitude it was clearly seen who was called for in the hour of danger—whose prayers were required when the grim form of death was descried in the distance—whose advice was followed—whose counsel most prized ! It was certainly not Mr. Powell's.

When dissensions arise, and “ wars, with rumours of war,” then are the discontented pleased—the evil-minded happy. Mr. Powell, that he might be in nothing behindhand with these riotous times, began to preach loudly against the Church. On her holy and uplifted head did he hurl forth anathemas loud and strong—which, if they failed to reach so high,

leaving Her pure and unscathed, fell with rebounding effect on the gaping crowds below. So true is it that Folly can draw the multitude even with a silken thread. Stupid people like being roused, no matter by what. Foolish people live in a whirl; and whatever good may be done to death in their whirling, it hindereth them not—whirl they must. There are large companies of both stupid and foolish people to be met with anywhere; and when they join the riotous, it may be that calm Religion and lovely Peace are driven from their exalted pedestals.

It was long ere the evil gained ground in the Valley of the Hundred Fires.

At the Castle they mourned over the recklessness of the ironmasters. At the parsonage they prayed for the misguided rioters. Within the circle of the Cinder Tip rose aspirations to Heaven for peace

and good feelings, that were outraged and scorned without it.

The last drop was added to the brimming cup. The military were sent down by Government, in consequence of a demand from the most timid of the ironmasters. Among these was Mr. Robarts, urged on by his fearful, half-frantic wife. As he still had the management of Lord Bernard's property, the motives from which he acted appeared to emanate from his employer. And the evil spread even to the very edge of the Cinder Tip.

And now began the influence of Mr. Howel, and such as himself. These were not times to be contented with the mild and holy expositions of Mr. Leslie, or the learned, somewhat curious, but unrefutable tenets of Mr. Sabine. The people gloated over strong, coarse anathemas. They lusted after violent and seditious harangues; they craved excitement, no matter of what kind.

It requires an eye-witness to write a history of startling events. Retold after time has thrown a veil over the little incidents that, gathered up, beget the great mass of horror, many links are wanting, and the character of truth is too marred to give interest to the tale. Many outbreaks have occurred since. Let those who remember them recall the facts. Human frailty follows generally a beaten track, and there is nothing more sure than that there are faults on both sides when dissensions such as these arise.

Not being born at the time of this particular riot, 'tis as well to confine the history of it only to those incidents recorded in the papers from which this biography is drawn. Mrs. Robarts fled, taking with her seven daughters and two sons, and all the train of governesses and servants that belonged to them. For few as have been the words, and short the space taken

to describe the beginning of the disaffection up to its actual outbreak, three years had elapsed. Three years since Mr. and Mrs. Leslie had taken their first holiday, and given up their eldest daughter into the hands of her aunt.

During these three years the population had not decreased. Imitating the brief language of Scripture, we must tell that Mrs. Leslie had Gwladys and Gwendoline—and Mrs. Robarts, Elizabeth and Anna: the latter lady moved to give her daughter these respectable and well-known names at the instigation of Mrs. Reine. That good lady, scandalized at her daughter's choice of such heathenish titles, insinuated to Mrs. Robarts that peculiar blessings of both health and strength were accorded to those children whose parents sanctified them with Scriptural names. Mrs. Robarts, weak and credulous, snatched at any whim that might benefit her darlings; and in-

deed they were a sickly, peevish race of children, justifying any theory their mother might adopt that would tend to fit them for a struggle with the world.

Now, however, she carried them all off from still greater danger, and would fain have carried off her husband also. That, however, was wholly impossible. Old Captain Hill buckled on his long disused sword, and, sending his daughters up to the parsonage, prepared to defend his house as best he could. It lay sadly exposed, even in the very pathway of some of the disaffected ironworks.

Miss Charles was not without an individual virtue, evily as she has been delineated in this history. She was no coward; so determined, lone women as they were, that she and Betty would stand their ground, and remain in charge of their household goods. It doth not become an historian to point out that there lacked a



certain value in the eyes of an indifferent spectator to Miss Charles's goods and chattels, and still less attractive was she personally to the most interested gaze; consequently it might not unreasonably be inferred that Miss Charles's greatest safety against an incursion of rioters was the absence of anything worth taking. Betty, to be sure, was young and rosy when she took the trouble to wash her face; but as that was but seldom, owing to her mistress thinking soap an unnecessary luxury, and also from the well-known fact that Betty had a tongue and nails, it was not less probable she was her own safeguard, even as her mistress.

Mrs. Dawson, of course, remained at her post, the doctor's best assistant.

Mrs. Reine, also, was not to be frightened away by a bugbear. She looked at her school, and considered she had but to stand in the doorway to be respected and unmo-



lested. Alas, for that renegade from the peaceable community of the Quakers—she was always at war with the peccadilloes of human nature, and yet could not realize the crimes of that nature gone mad. She looked with horror and disgust upon a dissenter, a servant-girl with a flower in her bonnet, a recreant from the Sunday school; but she thought with mild leniency of thousands of men refusing to work for their own chosen masters, and rising up in defiance against any rule at all. In fact, she had exhausted all her expletives on the smaller sins. Having none left for the greater, she put them aside, as matters rather guessed at than known—rather meant to talk about than be real.

Mr. Sabine regarded all that had taken place, or was about to take place, as one of those phases of life which he would be glad to see, and test by his own eyes and sense. The probability that he might lose something

during the outbreak—perhaps his life—was not unregarded by him ; but, in his various wanderings over the world, he had been always prepared for such chances. He had been shipwrecked twice ; he had lost his worldly possessions thrice ; he had suffered hunger, thirst, pain—yet he had gained a vast quantity of knowledge and experience ; and if he had paid dearly in some respects, he by no means regretted it. And it was thus he thought of the probable struggle now impending.

Lord and Lady Bernard were not at home : they had been called suddenly from thence by the illness and subsequent death of her mother.

But the boys were at the Castle ; and—to their honour be it spoken—if Mrs. Reine, Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie, or the Hills, had any fear or care, it was for the safety of these boys more than their own.

Mr. Leslie was a magistrate. He was called upon by the colonel of the regiment to accompany him in that secular capacity. For many days Emily had expected this summons ; yet, when the peal of the bell sounded, rung in that sharp, impulsive manner that as much betokened an imminent danger as the military character of him who rang it, she sank back in her chair, white and motionless. John glanced round the room. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. That peal foreshadowed much to him, and, in drinking in one last look of a home-circle so beloved, so endeared, he felt the probability that he might never see it again.

Miss Hill was teaching her little god-daughter Pearl to draw, whose eager excitement coloured her cheek like a peach. Miss Frances Hill was reciting a marvellous tale to John and Nest, the former alive with intelligence and delight, the latter endeavouring to understand it all, by opening mouth and

eyes, as well as ears, to lose nothing of the sense of the story ; while, at her mother's feet, sat a round, roly-poly, good-humoured thing of three years of age, suffering the year-old child on mamma's knee to take great liberties with her straight, smooth, brown hair. This latter evidently possessed a sage and reasoning mind, gravely investigating the quality of the hair between her fingers, and not at all discomposed or turned from her purpose by the little good-humoured efforts to entice her to forego it made by the owner of the hair. Their father's large dark eyes were possessed by four of the children—John and Pearl alone inheriting their mother's fair complexion, and the latter her blue eyes.

Mr. Leslie gazed from one group to the other. They were pictures he delighted to behold ; and when, at last, his eyes fell upon her—the beloved, the sunbeam—for a moment he bewailed over that sudden, rousing peal. It was but for a moment. As if he

would not be unmanned, he resolutely turned from Emily's white face, and went half-way towards the door to meet the messenger.

It would appear that the Leslies were not given to much outward demonstration. As John turned from her, Emily rose, and, placing the younger child by its sister, drew calmly to his side.

The martial tread, the rattling of the sword in its scabbard, the clanging spurs, and the commanding, ringing voice roused all from their absorbing occupations, turning the eyes of even the fascinated Nest in their round wonder towards the door.

A bright, healthy, handsome young face appeared beneath the formidable helmet, all his white teeth glistening as he laughingly said—

“Work at last, Mr. Leslie. We are to march to-night, and the colonel has sent me for you.”

His very manner was contagious. The

children gazed in prodigious admiration; Miss Frances Hill thought him quite a darling; Miss Hill was delighted to see him so brave; Mr. Leslie felt inspirited by his cheerfulness; and Emily—Emily went for John's great-coat and hat. To do her justice, she was not in the least capable of uttering a word; but because she was so nervous and upset, was that any reason why John should go without his great-coat, which he would entirely have forgotten himself?

"I will send, love, or write," whispered John, as she assisted him to put it on.

Emily's only answer was to snatch Pearl's pencil, and put it into his pocket, with some slips of paper—and no further leave-taking passed between them. In those days the little endearments of affection were not given or taken in public; and though Emily bent her head to catch the last creak of John's well-known shoes, and John lovingly looked back on the little twinkle of light, if haply



he might catch her shadow in the window—no one knew they did so; perhaps not either the one of the other. But, at the footstool of the Almighty constant prayers were borne upwards by never-wearying wings all that night—those prayers that grow in intensity and faith the more they are uttered. In this occupation we must leave Emily, conscious that her wisdom and love were best shown thus. Our business lies with Mr. Leslie. He was not altogether comfortable at discovering that he was expected to ride on horseback with the troop sent for him. John was not a good horseman—in fact, it may as well be allowed, he was a very bad one. Nevertheless, he felt it incumbent on him to show no fear, and he mounted the great dragoon-horse sent for him without hesitation.

“I have brought you our drum-major’s horse, Mr. Leslie, with his bearing reins; so that if you like a couple of troopers to



lead you, as they do him, you will have nothing to do but stick on."

Mr. Leslie acknowledged the forethought of the young officer in suitable terms of gratitude, accepting the proposal at once.

"To tell you the truth, sir," continued the young dragoon, "our colonel heard you were an indifferent—that is to say, a bad—I mean, that you were not accustomed to ride; and as we shall have to go a devil of a pace, he considered it best——"

"Make no apologies, young sir. I feel myself pretty secure in my saddle, and would rather use the time in going forward at a decent pace, than wasting any, and having to make it up."

"Very good, sir — I am quite of your opinion. Fall in, men! Forwards—Trot!"

As the fine clear voice filled the air with its buoyant cheeriness, Mr. Leslie felt a martial spirit rising so suddenly within him, he began to doubt whether he had

not mistaken his vocation in life. Suffice it to say that, under the effect of it, a certain exhilaration did away with any uneasiness regarding his unusual position; and having no trouble about guiding his steed, he had nothing to do but stick on, and go best pace.

Consequently, he gained a good name at once, and was handsomely spoken of ever after at mess "as a pattern of a parson." It is doubtful whether he or Emily fully appreciated the value of such praise; but at all events it was more comprehensible to them than the probable encomium now in vogue. A modern young dragoon would most likely have called Mr. Leslie "a brick," that expressive but most paradoxical epithet so delighted in at the present day. But we dawdle on light matters when fearful and startling events are imminent.

On one of those bare ridgy hills, rising,

in the misty night, with a gloomy grandeur that wanted no other aid to awe the mind, lay, just moved with the hum of sullen murmurs, twenty thousand irritated pitmen.

As the little handful of dragoons galloped up with the precision and unity of a machine, the fitful moon glided from behind a black cloud, and lighted up a sea of troubled and vindictive faces.

By the soldiers, and those accustomed to the wild passions that take up their dwelling within the heart of man, and render his condition worse than the basest born slave of humanity, an apprehension of the power of this multitude to do evil might be felt. But, strange to say, no such thought entered Mr. Leslie's heart. For seven years he had looked down from his pulpit upon such faces. They were familiar to him. They were his sheep, his fold. He gazed at them

now, as the loving pastor might do upon some erring, straying children, whom he meant to recall back by soft words and gentle persuasions. Yet he did not withhold his admiration from the gallantry and mettle so conspicuous in the little troop of dragoons, who bore themselves as fearlessly as if they had to do with no enemy more serious than the countless sheep among the hills. Twenty thousand daring and desperate men against fifty gay and mettlesome troopers. The odds, even in Mr. Leslie's mind, began to grow stupendous, and he manœuvred to place his steed nearer to the handsome boy commander who so excited his admiration.

"Your colonel, where is he, my friend?" he asked.

"Faith, I know not. I believe there is another body of men, even more numerous than these, whom he has gone to

meet. I was told to bring you here,  
and I have done so. My men, fall in,  
and make ready for duty!"

## CHAPTER XV.

“ We must not give implicit credence  
To every warning voice that makes itself  
Be listen'd to in the heart.”

COLERIDGE.

FOUR days had passed and gone since that ringing peal had summoned John from Emily's side, and he was still absent. Pale was her face, sad the light of her eyes, slow her light footstep ; yet had he sent her messages and notes on every possible occasion. But the rumour of dark deeds had penetrated even into the enclosure of the Cinder Tip.

Emily's first thought, after John's de-

parture, was the safety of the two Bernard boys; and she had gone up herself that same night to bring them down to the parsonage, not so much for safety, as that she might share whatever fate was to befall them. At first the brave boys demurred, thinking their father could have no more fitter protectors for his house and property than his two sons, boys though they were. But the head servants, with the keepers and the groom, having declared they were better able to protect and guard the place without the additional care of the two young gentlemen, and Mrs. Leslie representing they had no male defenders at the parsonage, they consented to her request. Emily had also wished her mother and Mr. Sabine to join them. But Mrs. Reine, strong in the power of her school, had no fear; and Mr. Sabine for worlds would not shut himself up for safety—he was cu-



riously anxious to be in the midst of everything.

The first report that reached the parsonage was that Mr. Leslie had read the Riot Act, only done when matters were supposed to be in extremities.

The second report was the utter inefficiency of so small a body of troops to keep order should the evil spirit break out into deeds.

Anon came the news that a body seven thousand strong were marching up to the Castle, with the intention of taking the young gentlemen as hostages, with the view to extort the fulfilment of their wildest wishes from Lord Bernard.

Seeing the uselessness of contending with so great a crowd, they had been permitted to search the Castle from cellar to roof. The spirit of mischief broke out, and might have increased to ruder acts, but that the sight of Lady Bernard's

boudoir, with its bales of flannel, its piles of books, its evident devotion to the welfare of the poor and sick, touched these wild hearts. They hurriedly departed, leaving traces in every room but this of their unwelcome presence. A long time did it take to purify the Castle from this rude visit. Either regret that they had gained nothing, but rather shown some pusillanimity, as they thought, coming upon the White House in their descent down, they surrounded it, clamorously shouting for food and drink.

Mrs. Reine showed herself with unflinching courage, Milner behind her mincing and bridling. Alas, for the gratitude of men! They remembered none of Mrs. Reine's good deeds. They locked her and Milner up in one room, and tied Mr. Sabine in a chair in another—all because they were disappointed to find in that frugal household no more food than sufficed for the hunger of two of them.

"Now, if you sets a hollering and a making of a nise afore we gets well away, we'll be oop and scragg thee, friend," was their pleasing remark to Mr. Sabine.

"*Verbum sat*," quoth he in answer, resigned, but still curious.

"Mr. Sabine! Mr. Sabine!" cried Mrs. Reine, through the keyhole; "come quickly and let us out!"

"*Verbum sat*," quoth he again, still reflecting on the incidents of the last half-hour, and drawing his conclusions therefrom.

"Oh! Mr. Sabine, Mr. Sabine, will you let us be murdered?" shrieked Milner.

"*Verbum sat*," again murmured that incorrigible man.

By degrees, however, he came to a knowledge of their situation.

"Willingly, my dear madam—most wil-

lingly, good Milner, but an accident—an impediment——”

“Surely, surely, you are not wounded——”

“The 'eavens be good to us, 'ave they shot you, sir?”

“No, no, not quite so bad as that; I think I have no wound—indeed, there was no shooting—but—but—I am tied into my chair.”

“Then pray be good enough to untie yourself as fast as you can, and let us out.”

“My dear madam, it appears to me impossible.”

“Impossible, and you a man of science—experience—always endeavouring to do impossible things!”

“True, madam, true, very true—that is quite correct; what is impossible I always try to render possible.”

Strengthened and encouraged by this

notion, Mr. Sabine did exert himself. Nevertheless all his efforts would have proved useless, but for Milner's suggestion, that if he could not rid himself of the chair, he must just bring it along with him.

“ Ah! excellent!—Columbus and his egg.—Mahomet and the Mountain—the Mouse and the Lion—the rub of Aladdin's lamp—nothing more simple, and yet marvellous that I did not think of it!”

Meantime the body of pitmen paused before the Cinder Tip. It might be that the thought rose within them to climb its steep side, and descend into the sacred precincts of the parsonage. But there were two little figures even now on the top, who, so far from being scared at the wild and disorderly multitude, clasped hands together, and resolutely ran down the slope right into the middle of them. Two little hatless creatures, five and six years of age,

with black curls, tossed wildly by the sporting freaks of the wind.

“If you please,” said the boy, raising his frank eyes up to their grim faces, “have you seen our papa?”

“And who moight he be?” began one.

“Whoy, donot thou see?—this is the parson’s likely boy, the oney one he ha,” interrupted another.

“Yes, I am the parson’s son, and Nessie is his daughter. We have been watching for you ever so long, because mamma is unhappy about papa, and we thought you could tell us.”

“He wor pure well, not long ago, young gentleman. We respect your papa, and wonot hurt him.”

“Thank you. Then may we tell mamma you will keep him safe from cruel men?”

“Dost thee call we cruel, little man?”

“Yes, if you hurt papa!”

“Then shake hands—we wunna do it.”

John and Nest gravely shook hands with as many as chose to put out theirs, saying to each, with innocent simplicity, as if to seal the compact, "Thank you!" Then, in high glee, they sped up the Cinder Tip—making, the one a curtsey, and the other a bow, to their wild friends, ere they raced down the other side.

"It wor main onpossible to refuse that little chap. It's not passen wonder his fayther's dotin' on him—he's pure handsum."

"It's amazin' the luik in his e'en. I'd be freeghted wor he moy bairn—the Almoighty hae marked him for His ain, I am thinking."

"Thou'st a fule—whar be we to gotten vittels, think thee? I am amaist ready to claw the grass."

"There's nae use in ganging hame. The gude wives are purposed to gie us nought until we git our'e roights, as mony are o' the



flinching road. But we mun ha'e someat. Lets gang to Robarts's—there'll be grand pickings there, I am thinking."

And so did they.

No *boudoir* of Mrs. Robarts's stayed their unruly hands by the sight of its sacred contents. No remembrance of Mr. Robarts broke in to spare his home and valuables. Found almost tenantless—the few servants within it flying on their approach—they left it so completely gutted and destroyed, that it was unlikely even the fondest remembrance and love of it, as a once happy home, would feel justified in sanctioning its restoration.

When Mischief once lets loose her votaries, not even her own bewailments can stay the mad and useless ravages they commit.

In such hours, Art is dethroned and irremediably violated ; Science is delivered up into brutal hands ; while Genius and

Refinement fly mournfully away, aghast at the monstrous degradations Fate suffers such powers to undergo.

Meantime young John and Nest had flown wildly into the parsonage, shouting —“Papa is safe!—papa is safe!”

Mrs. Leslie, anticipating much more than the reality, interpreted the cry into the fact that he had arrived, and rushed out to meet him.

The consequent explanation did not place John and Nest on a high pinnacle of favour. Their exploit appeared to gain no applause but in their own eyes; and though Emily was too just to visit on their poor little heads the bitterness of her disappointment, she clearly considered the whole tale as unworthy of notice—the hopes it gave valueless as wind.

But mamma's evident disappointment faded before Wilsy's high wrath. It was out of the power of anyone dwelling in

the same house with young John to be displeased with him; but Nest, Nessie—always wilfully rompish, and determinately boyish—was in deepest disgrace for running out without bonnet or tippet. Master John might shake hands with pitmen—it showed his sweet disposition; but Miss Nest should remember she was a little lady, and act as such. So she spent the rest of the evening in a corner, and Pearl shared it with her, from a vague feeling common among the Leslies, that some little injustice attends all mundane punishments.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“ Poor ! did you call me ?  
My wants are but few,  
And generous nature  
Gives more than my due ;  
The air and the sunshine,  
Fresh water and health,  
And heart to enjoy them—  
All these are my wealth.  
And, crown of all riches,  
Far better than pelf,  
I’ve a true heart who loves me,  
For sake of myself !  
With these, and my patience,  
And strength to endure,  
My health, and my honour,  
How can I be poor ? ”

CHARLES MACKAY.

THERE occurs this passage in Mr. Leslie’s  
journal :—

“Many and merciful are the ways of God, and in nothing are they more benign than the paths by which He leads us to acknowledge and implore His protecting care. Full to repletion did He fill us with gratitude for our escape from the ‘sudden insurrection of wicked men.’ And if, in mine heart, I lifted up my head in secret pride that my ministry had not been unprofitable—if I listened with complacency to the praises and thanks of men, Thou, O God! gently laidst me down on the bare stones of weakness and insufficiency. I know not when I enjoyed life as then. The successful issue of our efforts to frustrate the evil intents of my poor, misguided people—the happiness and delight of my dear and excellent wife—the many good and true friends we have made—the health and intelligence of our children—all made me turn to ‘Our Father,’ and feel, as Job

did, mighty in the love of the Lord. Yet to keep me in the true path of humility and dependence I begin to feel a little straitened for money. Also there are many sick among us, which, indeed, we could not but look for, rebellious and hardened against the laws of the Lord and man as were the multitude. Distress, too, of poverty and privation was added to them, so that, not even with the generosity of my kind mother-in-law, do I find myself wholly free from debt. Moreover, the wants of the people are increasing, the sickness gains ground, and their long suspension from work has left them no means to combat the evil with nourishing diet and warm clothing. We may not murmur, they have brought it on themselves; let me record the mercies, not the evils, we receive at the hands of God. I have now six daughters, besides my son

John — may God bless them, and their mother, whose valuable life was so nearly lost to me at the time of the riots. I endeavour to look more tenderly upon the little weakling twin, whose frail life bears testimony to my Emily's fears, and whose little sister left her, wearied with an hour's breath of the world. And yet my good mother-in-law considered the one who died would live, and that the living one was dying. When I was called in haste to baptize these little unexpected ones, Rose, the first-born, appeared to me lively and thriving; while Lily, the younger by half-an-hour, drew breath so faintly, I scarce thought she would live to be signed with the holy sign of the Cross. Rose died within half-an-hour, and the little Lily is now eight months old, weak in all things but her loving ways. It may be this little one's life, saved as by a miracle, is meant for some good purpose. Into the



holy keeping of thy Saviour I place thee, my child. Amen."

This part of Mr. Leslie's diary, detailing a little of the family history, is given in full. They had indeed enjoyed themselves greatly, after the cessation of the riots, and Emily's convalescence. The Castle had been full of guests; gaiety and good humour had been brought forward to charm away discontent and ill-will. The Leslies had been made much of by all the great people; Lord Bernard, in no manner behindhand, acknowledging his vast debt to Mr. Leslie. His people had returned to their duty, and disaffection had silently crept away. John and Emily were contemplating another holiday to go and see their darling Adeline; for her aunt, alarmed at the riots, had never yet fulfilled her promise of bringing the child to see her parents.

It was in the first pang of disap-

pointment that Mr. Leslie made the remarks in his journal just quoted. They were indeed too straitened in purse to think of the proposed expedition.

Mrs. Reine had been to see Lady Armitage twice since Adeline had become her care, and Emily had tried to persuade herself that her grandmamma's report was as satisfactory as if she had herself seen her. But Mrs. Reine had never quite recovered the shock of the riots, and showed no inclination to move from her house now; and though Emily could not doubt the love of her sister for her adopted child, yet she began to pine for one look of her. She feared lest the little affectionate heart should lose the remembrance of those dearest to her.

Mr. Sabine had also not recovered his incarceration. He made such fruitless endeavours to discover a remedy for any future unfortunate tied by both arms to the

back of a chair, that he became more absent than ever, requiring all Mrs. Reine's watchfulness. Only this very day did she not overtake him (herself, Emily, and Mr. Leslie, in the Castle chariot—or charret, as it was then called—going up to dinner there, it being very wet,) walking away, utterly forgetful that he was also to be called for? And as if that was not sufficient to portray the erratic state of his mind, he held his walking-stick steadily over his head, carefully carrying his umbrella under his arm.

“My good sir,” remonstrated Mrs. Reine, afterwards, “did you not observe the rain running off like a gutter from the brim of your hat?”

“I was conscious of a dampness, my dear madam; but experience has lately taught me there are situations from which nothing can free us, no matter how disagreeable, perplexing, or undignified. Hm—hun—hein—hm!”

These few hieroglyphics are intended to represent the end of his remark, for he always concluded every sentence with some few words in an unknown tongue. It was suggested that it was in this manner he kept up the remembrance of the various languages he had learnt. And so strong was the habit, that guttural murmurs, strange and out of season, might be heard falling from his lips, even in the pulpit. But he was a good man—so good that his very weaknesses were loved by those who knew him, as essential parts of himself.

There was one person who had never returned to the Valley of a Hundred Fires since she had fled from it. This was Mrs. Robarts. And indeed she was justified in not returning. She had no house to inhabit.

Rather apprehensive lest she should become permanently determined never to return, Mr. Robarts began to build a new home, on so magnificent a scale, it bid fair

to rival Bernard Castle ; and it was to be so replete with beauty and luxury, that Mrs. Robarts must be more than mortal woman could she let her fears triumph over her grandeur.

But we authors, who are in every one's secrets, know very well that Mrs. Robarts would have returned without the attraction of a new and magnificent home. Despising her in her heart—compassionating her, even—Mrs. Robarts felt a certain attraction towards Mrs. Leslie, that became an inexplicable yearning.

It might be the sort of rivalry regarding their yearly babies. But Mrs. Robarts was still much a-head in numbers ; and her little, graceful, delicate girls—beautifully dressed and highly accomplished—were not, even by Mrs. Leslie herself, lowered down to a standard of comparison with her sun-burnt, freckled little maidens, in washed-out frocks and battered bonnets. Even Pearl,

with her cheeks of peach colour, and dancing blue eyes — her little light footsteps and graceful gambols—Pearl, the admiration of everybody, the secret delight of her father, the unconscious pet of her mother, the open and acknowledged darling of both her god-mothers—even she looked too rudely healthy by the side of the little fair Robartses. No, it was no rivalry—it was no delight in the superiority of her family over Emily's.

It was simply her own character.

To Mrs. Robarts such a character was as enigmatical as it was alluring, She was fascinated by it.

In the first place, Emily was so unselfish. She recorded, with genuine pleasure, every little thing she might chance to hear in favour of any of the Robartses. Now, Mrs. Robarts was very different. She might not care particularly to know that Emily was considered prettier than herself; because, naturally, she was not vain of her beauty.



But touch her with regard to her children, and she was instantly alive with quivering pricks of umbrage. She could no more listen to, or, harder still, repeat, anything in favour of the Leslie children, than sit down and converse with Mr. Sabine in every language that he knew.

Sickness had visited both families; and Mrs. Robarts gazed upon Emily with vague wonder. She went about her parish duties, organized her household, received visitors, just as if she had no children at all—certainly none that were sick.

And yet she could not call her heartless. Her colour came and went quickly—evidently with apprehension—when Dr. Dawson prescribed stronger measures, or looked a little grave; but all that he ordered was done without fuss—without any more excitement than an every-day circumstance.

Mrs. Robarts' favourite amusement was to come and spend a morning at the parsonage.



If she was sufficiently early, she found four little girls, seated on stools, learning their lessons—from which it was obvious, often as she tried, they were not to be diverted. Soon Emily appeared, having settled her household matters, and, drawing a large basket of work towards her, proceeded to hear the aforesaid lessons; and though she chattered incessantly to Mrs. Robarts, the latter lady observed not a task was passed over, not a word allowed to be missed; and the gentle tones of praise were not so soft as those of censure—yet both had equal power. And all the while, a pile of mended socks and little garments increased more and more.

By the time that Mrs. Robarts was weary of sitting, young John came in. Now, there was a certain beauty about John, that even Mrs. Robarts could mention in admiration. But, first let it be understood, her two little sons were yet in petticoats: there could be no rivalry.

Young John had more than beauty. His whole countenance beamed with intellect. Soft large eyes, of the colour of rich brown velvet, looked inquiringly into everything you said or did. Your motive must be clear, your thought pure, or your tongue would falter and your eyes droop at the clear gaze of those questioning eyes.

At four years of age young John had asked questions the elder John was puzzled to answer. At seven years he had brought his Latin book to his father, demurring as to the propriety of a certain mode of translating a passage out of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and requesting to read the first lines of the *Odyssey* in Greek.

For the future of young John, Mr. Sabine predicted extraordinary things. Phrenology was just beginning to throw a beam of light over the physical world. And he felt John's bumps. The question was not what was wanting, but what he would do with the im-

ments he possessed. Causality, order, imaginativeness, ideality, wit, struggled for the greatest space. The elder John raised castles in the air, on the topmost of which he saw young John, seated on a woolsack, his beautiful child face smothered in a Lord Chancellor's wig.

But at present he is no further advanced towards this desirable situation than to do his arithmetic with his mother. Afterwards to watch his sisters writing, taking care that the awkward Nest inked no one but herself.

Oh! rare boy! good, wise, and lovely. The Almighty permits us now and then to see on this earth a living type of the earliest Adam, to show from what we are fallen.

Mrs. Robarts did not dare to be envious of this boy. She feared to draw upon herself a curse.

After lessons were over, the little ones sped out of the room in the highest glee. Had they not a Cinder Tip? And where

could more happiness be found than racing up and down it?

Mrs. Robarts was aware that Emily was a great reader, spite of all her avocations. Also she was a politician, a very fierce, one-sided politician. We are forced to acknowledge it. Emily was so rank a Tory, she would not believe a single good thing of a Whig. Mrs. Robarts had often listened to her, holding forth in highest animation, and divulging at the same time an amount of knowledge concerning the now existing strategy of the political world that amazed and puzzled her.

Mrs. Robarts did not care to see things much beyond her nose, but she respected those who took the trouble of investigating matters that concerned the nation, and not the nursery. Patriotic principles generally demand admiration. To be true, they must be so honest, and free from selfishness.

We hope we have shown sufficient cause

to explain the paradox, that Mrs. Robarts despised Emily, yet looked up to her; cared not for her advice, yet was always desirous of her good opinion. It is presumed there was a mixture of the simplicity of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent in Emily's character.

Perhaps the great charm to Mrs. Robarts was her faith. Emily hoped the best always, and, in constant anticipation of good rather than evil, she was over and past her difficulties almost before she felt them. She is now in a great one.

John wants a new great-coat; the children all require new winter frocks; the roof has been blown off the mud cottage belonging to some disreputable people called Meredith; they wished to go and see their darling Adeline, and John has got nine pounds, some odd shillings, to effect it all.

The wish was dismissed at once by both parents. Emily had not been fully let into

the secret of the excessive dilapidation of John's coat. Those four nights with the pitmen had taken a year's wear out of it. So she was only cognisant of two imperative necessities—the children's frocks and the Merediths' cottage.

John was busy in his study. A soup-kitchen was being established by Lord Bernard, he undertaking all preliminary expenses, with a permanent subscription, and the rest was to be made up among the wealthy inhabitants of the Valley of a Hundred Fires. Now John could not call himself wealthy, nevertheless out of what God had given him some was to be returned to the poor. John sent the idea of a new great-coat to the winds, and put down the sum meant for it to the soup-kitchen.

At this moment Emily entered.

“Oh, John! something must immediately be done—the Merediths have got the fever, and their roof is still half off.”

“My dear love, I really am too poor. Cannot your mother assist you?”

“Oh, no, she won’t: the Merediths are dissenters.”

“Then there is the more need that I, a clergyman of the Church of England, should mark my abhorrence of such characters.”

John liked to have a grave joke.

“Now, John, pray don’t say what you do not think. Can it make any difference of what religion people are, when they are sick and in want?”

“It appears to do so with your good mother.”

“But mamma is not you, you know, John.”

“Granted; well, suppose you ask Lord Bernard.”

“Worse and worse, John; don’t you know these are the people who have encroached on his manor, and built that



dreadful cottage now tumbling down; and that they steal the wood and kill the game? Oh, he would never help them, but probably be vexed with us if we do."

"Then, my dear wife, we had better let them alone altogether."

"That is so unlike you, John."

And something like a vexed tear dimmed Emily's eye.

"Come, love, in this instance I must consult Lord Bernard. If he consents, you can take the three pounds you wished me to put aside for our little daughters' winter coats. I can spare nothing else."

"That will do very well. I only hope Lord Bernard won't refuse. Make the case very pitiable, mind, John."

And so Emily left, in renovated spirits, and as she shut the door her husband laid down his pen and thought. If his better judgment warred against his wife's

over-zeal, at all events it did not lessen his love for her. A few murmured words sounded very like benisons on her.

But Emily had a harder task to fight with Wilsy. That good woman's Roman nose waxed hotter and more shiny, as Emily, not daring to look at her, stammered over her lame excuses about the much-required winter coats.

"It can't be, mum," she said, stoutly. "I am ashamed to go out with Miss Nest. She is heedless and mischievous, but she's past bearing in the way she grows: she is out of her things 'most afore they're made."

"She can have an old dress of mine cut up for her, Wilson."

And Emily glided out abashed.

"My goodness! but the missus 'ud give away herself if she could. And them Robartses coming out on Michaelmas day with purple cloth pelisses, binded and

braided, and beaver hats with long white feathers. Ough! it's past my 'standing."

It was well Mrs. Leslie had fled.

END OF VOL. I.



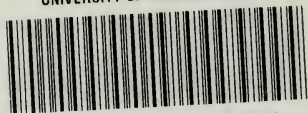








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